1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document is a draft environmental impact report (DEIR) on the proposed North Fork American River Trail Project (proposed project). It has been prepared by Placer County (County) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15000 et seq.). As specified in Section 15367 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the public agency that has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project is the lead agency for CEQA compliance. The County is the lead agency under CEQA, because it has the principal responsibility for approving and carrying out the project, has the first discretionary action of the proposed project, and is the primary source of funding and grant recipient for funding of the proposed project. The County Board of Supervisors is responsible for certifying and approving the EIR for the proposed project. This document has been prepared in accordance with the Placer County Planning Department format for DEIRs (Placer County 2006).

1.1 TYPE AND PURPOSE OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

1.1.1 TYPE OF EIR

In accordance with Section 15161 of the State CEQA Guidelines, this document is a project EIR that examines the environmental impacts of a specific proposed project. As a project EIR, this document examines the potential environmental effects of all phases of the project: planning, construction, and operation.

1.1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

A state or local public agency must comply with CEQA when it undertakes an activity that may cause a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect change in the environment. The County has prepared this DEIR to meet the requirements of CEQA. An EIR is an informational document used to inform agency decision-makers and the general public of any significant environmental effects of a project, identify feasible ways to mitigate the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project that can reduce environmental impacts. As required by CEQA, the County will consider the information presented in the EIR when determining whether to approve the proposed project.

1.2 SCOPE OF THE DEIR AND EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

1.2.1 SCOPE AND ORGANIZATION OF THIS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Pursuant to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines, a lead agency shall focus an EIR's discussion on significant environmental effects and may limit discussion on other effects to brief explanations about why they are not significant (PRC Section 21002.1, State CEQA Guidelines Section 15143). Furthermore, indication of the manner in which significant impacts can be mitigated or avoided is included among the purposes of an EIR. A determination of which impacts would be potentially significant was made for this project based on review of the information presented in the 2004 initial study/environmental assessment (IS/EA) prepared for the project, on comments received as part of the public review process for the project, additional research and analysis of relevant project data, and analysis by environmental professionals.

SCOPE OF THIS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This DEIR analyzes a range of environmental impact topics associated with implementation of the proposed project. The County has determined that the proposed project has the potential to result in environmental impacts on the following resources that are addressed in detail in this DEIR:

- Land Use (Chapter 4.0)
- Biological Resources (Chapter 5.0)
- Cultural Resources (Chapter 6.0)
- Visual Resources (Chapter 7.0)
- Transportation and Circulation (Chapter 8.0)
- Air Quality (Chapter 9.0)
- Noise (Chapter 10.0)
- Soils, Geology, and Seismicity (Chapter 11.0)
- Hydrology and Water Quality (Chapter 12.0)
- Public Services (Chapter 13.0)
- Recreation (Chapter 14.0)
- Hazardous Materials and Hazards (Chapter 15.0)

ORGANIZATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This DEIR is organized as follows:

Chapter 1.0, "Introduction," summarizes the purpose, need, objectives, and scope of the proposed project; describes the purpose of the EIR and provides an overview of the environmental review process for the project; discusses agency roles and authorities; and provides details on project scoping.

Chapter 2.0, "Summary," summarizes the conclusions of the environmental analysis.

Chapter 3.0, "Project Description," includes a description of the project location; a discussion of the background and history of the project; a description of the project objectives; and descriptions of the components and features of the proposed project, including construction techniques and schedule.

Chapter 4.0, "Land Use," includes the environmental setting, regulatory setting, and impacts of the proposed project on land use and planning, as well as mitigation measures for those effects.

Chapter 5.0, "Biological Resources," includes the environmental setting, regulatory setting, and impacts of the proposed project on biological resources, as well as mitigation measures for those effects.

Chapter 6.0, "Cultural Resources," includes the environmental setting, regulatory setting, and impacts of the proposed project on cultural resources, as well as mitigation measures for those effects.

Chapter 7.0, "Visual Resources," includes the environmental setting, regulatory setting, and impacts of the proposed project on aesthetics and visual resources, as well as mitigation measures for those effects.

Chapter 8.0, "Transportation and Circulation," includes the environmental setting, regulatory setting, and impacts of the proposed project on traffic and transportation, as well as mitigation measures for those effects.

Chapter 9.0, "Air Quality," includes the environmental setting, regulatory setting, and impacts of the proposed project on air quality, as well as mitigation measures for those effects.

Chapter 10.0, "Noise," includes the environmental setting, regulatory setting, and impacts of the proposed project related to noise, as well as mitigation measures for those effects.

Chapter 11.0, "Soils, Geology, and Seismicity," includes the environmental setting, regulatory setting, and impacts of the proposed project on geology and soils, as well as mitigation measures for those effects.

Chapter 12.0, "Hydrology and Water Quality," includes the environmental setting, regulatory setting, and impacts of the proposed project on hydrology and water quality, as well as mitigation measures for those effects.

Chapter 13.0, "Public Services," includes the environmental setting, regulatory setting, and impacts of the proposed project on public services, as well as mitigation measures for those effects.

Chapter 14.0, "Recreation," includes the environmental setting, regulatory setting, and impacts of the proposed project on recreation, as well as mitigation measures for those effects.

Chapter 15.0, "Hazardous Materials and Hazards," includes the environmental setting, regulatory setting, and impacts of the proposed project on hazardous materials and hazards, as well as mitigation measures for those effects.

Chapter 16.0, "Other CEQA-Required Sections," describes the alternatives considered and eliminated for the proposed project; alternatives selected for the proposed project, and the evaluation of the environmental effects of those alternatives; significant unavoidable effects on the environment; irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources; growth-inducing effects; and cumulative impacts.

Chapter 17.0, "Report Preparers," lists individuals who participated in the preparation of the EIR, organized by organization and agency.

Chapter 18.0, "References and Persons Consulted," lists the sources of information cited throughout this EIR.

1.2.2 EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

Based on previous environmental review of the project, it was determined that the proposed project would not result in significant impacts in the several resource areas. Therefore, the following resource areas do not require further analysis in this DEIR:

- Agricultural Resources
- Population, Employment, and Housing
- Mineral Resources
- Public Utilities and Service Systems

These resource areas are described briefly below.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Although agricultural uses are compatible with the zoning of the project area, the lands within the project area are not currently being used for agricultural purposes. Because of the existing topography, the area does not possess high value for agriculture and it is not expected to be used for farming or grazing in the future. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the loss of any agricultural resources or the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. Given these findings, implementation of the proposed project would have no effect on this topic; therefore, the impact of the proposed project on agricultural resources will not be discussed further in this DEIR.

POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND HOUSING

The proposed project would not involve the construction of new homes or businesses or the extension of roads or infrastructure serving residential or job forming uses. It would not involve the displacement of any existing housing, including affordable housing. The proposed project would not result in the disruption or division of an established community, including low-income or minority communities. Implementation of the proposed project would occur in stages, and the work would be performed by one or more crews from the California Conservation Corps, inmate crews, licensed contractors, volunteers, and/or County staff. These activities would generate short-term employment opportunities; however, the work would be temporary and occur over a 3-year period with certain activities starting and stopping for shorter durations within this time period. Because of the limited number and type of new jobs that would be generated and the temporary nature of those jobs, the proposed project would have very little effect on employment in the region. The proposed project would have little to no effect on population, employment, or housing; therefore, the impact of the proposed project on these resources will not be discussed further in this DEIR.

MINERAL RESOURCES

The proposed project would not result in the loss of any known mineral resources as identified by the California Geological Survey or the California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG 1988, California Geological Survey 2004). (It should be noted that the California Division of Mines and Geology changed its name to the California Geological Survey in 2002.) The proposed project would not impede or interfere with the establishment or continuation of existing mineral extraction operations. It would not result in the loss of available known mineral resources that would be of value to the region or residents of the state, and the site is not delineated as a locally important recovery site in the *Placer County General Plan*, the *Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap General Plan, Foresthill Divide Community Plan,* or the *Auburn State Recreation Area Interim Resource Management Plan*. Given these findings, implementation of the proposed project would have no effect with regard to mineral resources; therefore, the impact of the proposed project on mineral resources will not be discussed further in this DEIR.

PUBLIC UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

The proposed project does not have components that would require electricity, communication, wastewater treatment, sewer, septic, or water supply systems. The proposed project would provide local stormwater drainage for the staging areas. Solid waste materials created by the proposed project are expected to be minimal and would be collected and disposed of by the current solid waste collection contractor that serves the Auburn State Recreation Area (SRA) (Fisher, pers. comm., 2004). Therefore, the proposed project would have a negligible effect on public utilities and service systems. Given these findings, the impact of the proposed project on public utilities and service systems will not be discussed further in this DEIR.

1.3 DEFINITION OF BASELINE

According to Section 15125 of the State CEQA Guidelines, baseline conditions are defined as the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project as they exist at the time that the notice of preparation (NOP) is published. Therefore, for the purposes of this document the baseline conditions are defined as the conditions that existed in the project vicinity as of November 2005. This baseline condition was used as the basis for determining the level of significance of impacts of the proposed project.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Significance criteria were determined based on the Placer County CEQA Checklist and the environmental checklist found in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. Significance criteria for each resource area are listed under the impacts heading in each chapter (Chapters 4.0 through 15.0).

1.5 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

1.5.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The County is proposing to construct a multiple-use trail along the southern slope of the North Fork American River canyon in Placer County, approximately 40 miles northeast of Sacramento. The proposed trail would begin near Foresthill Road and the North Fork/Middle Fork American River confluence, and it would end at the Ponderosa Bridge, approximately 14.2 miles upstream. The trail would be located primarily on land owned by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) in the Auburn SRA, which is managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks). Meetings between the County, Reclamation, and State Parks resulted in agreements on issues related to trail planning and management. The decision to establish a trail along the North Fork American River as a stand-alone multiple-use trail with adequate parking and staging facilities, and with connections to existing trails, was among the topics of agreement between the County and State Parks.

The Auburn SRA has an established network of trails throughout the American River canyon that provide a variety of recreational opportunities. As the population of Placer County continues to grow, the demand for recreational facilities will continue to increase, and expansion of the trail network in this area has emerged as a priority for the County to accommodate residents and visitors alike.

The proposed project is based, in part, on the proposed *North Fork American River Trail, Trail Plan* (Placer County 2003a), which was prepared by North Fork Associates on behalf of the County, in conjunction with State Parks. The trail plan has provided the County with a working document that has been used to determine a proposed trail alignment, identify the obstacles and challenges of implementation, and provide guidelines for successful implementation. As part of the work required to identify the location and proposed alignment for a trail, the County convened a Trail Advisory Group (TAG) that is composed of local citizens and stakeholders such as equestrians, hikers, mountain bikers, and environmental organizations (Table 1-1). The TAG was instrumental in helping to identify a proposed trail alignment and in facilitating discussions among interested groups related to trail planning issues and areas of controversy. The TAG may continue to assist with aspects of the proposed project during the environmental review and construction phases. Should the project be approved and constructed, volunteers from various interest groups may also help with trail maintenance.

Table 1-1
Trail Advisory Group Members and Affiliations

Name	Activity	Affiliation
John Krogsrud	Runner, Canyon Scramble	Sierra Club
Janet Peterson	Equestrian	Meadow Vista Trails Association
Sherri Osborn	Runner, Hiker	Foresthill Trails Alliance
Tom McMahan	Hiker	Sierra Club
Jim Ferris	Hiker	PARC, Canyon Keepers
Joe Larkin	Equestrian, Runner	Western States Trail Foundation
Bill Wauters	Hiker, River User	PARC, Sierra Club
Russ Stein	Mountain Biker	FATRAC
Eric Peach	Hiker, River User	PARC, Sierra Club
Terry Davis	Hiker, River User	Sierra Club, PARC
Jill Dampier		California State Parks
Jim Michaels		California State Parks

Source: Placer County 2003a

The TAG and the County agreed on a set of evaluation criteria for use in identifying a suitable route for a stand-alone trail along the North Fork of the American River. These criteria have been expanded to serve as objectives for this proposed project, as follows:

- Provide access to the North Fork American River canyon within the Auburn SRA to a wide variety of users.
- Route the trail to discourage informal connections to the river/lake.
- Allow multiple nonmotorized uses along the trail.
- Reduce visibility of trail from the river/lake.
- Minimize environmental impacts of trail construction, including the avoidance of sensitive areas.
- Promote safe and sustainable grades and safe alignments.
- Connect to staging termini (Foresthill Road and Ponderosa Way).
- Provide connections to existing trails.
- Ensure emergency access to trail.
- Minimize conflicts with private property.
- Design alignment to minimize conflicts with trail users.

1.5.2 HISTORY OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND AREAS OF CONTROVERSY

In 2003–2004, the County initiated the environmental review process for the proposed trail project. A public scoping meeting was held on February 19, 2004, to present the project and to receive public comments. Because the project has been proposed on federally owned land, the County and Reclamation prepared a joint environmental document in 2004 to assess potential impacts of the project. An initial study/mitigated negative declaration (IS/MND) was prepared to satisfy the requirements of CEQA, and an Environmental Assessment (EA) to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500–1508) and associated federal guidelines. Because Reclamation was the lead agency under NEPA, the EA was prepared in accordance with Reclamation's *NEPA Handbook* (Reclamation 2000).

Section 15064(f)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines provides that a lead agency may prepare an MND under the following conditions:

> If the lead agency determines there is substantial evidence in the record that the project may have a significant effect on the environment but the lead agency determines that revisions in the project plans or proposals made by, or agreed to by, the applicant would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effect on the environment would occur and there is not substantial evidence in light of the whole record before the public agency that the project, as revised, may have a significant effect on the environment then a mitigated negative declaration shall be prepared.

Substantial evidence may include expert opinion based on facts, technical studies, or reasonable assumptions based on facts. The analysis conducted by the County resulted in the conclusion that no aspect of the proposed trail project, either individually or cumulatively, would result in a significant effect on the environment with inclusion of mitigation measures that were agreed to by the applicant (the County) and incorporated as part of the project to avoid or reduce potential adverse environmental effects of the project to less-than-significant levels. Therefore, the County prepared an MND for the project.

The County and Reclamation initiated the environmental review process for the proposed trail project that culminated in the IS/EA in 2003. A public scoping meeting was held on February 19, 2004, to present the project and to receive public comments regarding the project. The previously prepared joint environmental document was circulated for public review and comment on May 5, 2004. The County and Reclamation prepared responses to comments and issued the Final IS/EA on June 17, 2004 (Placer County and Reclamation 2004). The County approved the MND and filed a Notice of Determination pursuant to CEQA on August 24, 2004 (State

Clearinghouse No. 2004052021), and Reclamation adopted a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) pursuant to NEPA on August 2, 2004.

The Draft IS/EA was circulated for a 30-day public review and comment period that began on May 5, 2004. During the public review period for the IS/EA, members of the public provided comments expressing their views on potential environmental effects of the proposed project. The County and Reclamation prepared responses to comments and issued the Final IS/EA on June 17, 2004. Some comment letters were received following the close of the 30-day public review period. All of the comments received are considered part of the public record related to the previous environmental review process for the project.

In order to further evaluate a number of issues raised by the public, the County decided on May 10, 2005, to prepare an EIR for the project pursuant to CEQA and to vacate its earlier approval of the MND. The County decision did not affect the FONSI for the proposed project adopted by Reclamation. The County held a public scoping meeting for the EIR on August 31, 2005, to present the project and solicit comments and initiate the environmental review process for the EIR. The County released a CEQA Notice of Preparation (NOP) on November 10, 2005. This DEIR addresses issues raised by the public and provides a more comprehensive environmental review of topics that the County has determined should be subject to additional analysis beyond the information presented in the IS/MND. Comments on the North Fork American River Trail EIR NOP were presented verbally at the scoping meeting held in August 2005, and were submitted in writing during the 30-day public review period for the NOP (Appendix A).

The County held a public scoping and informational meeting on August 31, 2005, in Auburn, California. The County issued the NOP on November 10, 2005, to inform public agencies and the general public of its intention to prepare an EIR on the North Fork American River Trail Project. The NOP included a brief project description, a summary of the scoping and public review process, and an outline of the probable environmental impacts of the proposed project. The comments presented at the meeting were used by the County in determining the scope and content of the EIR. Appendix A of this DEIR contains a copy of the NOP, copies of the sign-in sheets and the scoping meeting notes, and a summary table of comments received during the NOP scoping process.

COMMENTS AND AREAS OF CONTROVERSY

The following are the main topics raised during the IS/EA and NOP scoping processes, and the chapters of this DEIR where these issues are addressed:

- Potential impacts of use of Sweco[1] trail dozer (Chapters 4.0 through 15.0)
- Potential damage to trail by bicyclists and equestrians (Chapter 14.0, “Recreation”)
- Potential effects on Wild and Scenic eligibility of the river (Chapter 7.0, “Visual Resources”)
- Potential degradation of streams from construction of bridges and retaining walls (Chapter 5.0, “Biological Resources”; and Chapter 12.0, “Hydrology and Water Quality”)
- Potential introduction of nonnative and invasive plant species (Chapter 5.0, “Biological Resources”)
- Potential conflicts among recreational users and between recreational users and wildlife (Chapter 14.0, “Recreation”)
- Use of existing trails versus creating a new trail (Section 16.1, “Alternatives,” in Chapter 16.0, “Other CEQA-Required Sections”)

[1] The Sweco is a trail building machine with a narrow track and blade that is used to build and compact trail features.

- Potential impacts on soil erosion and water quality (Chapter 11.0, "Soils, Geology, and Seismicity"; and Chapter 12.0, "Hydrology and Water Quality")
- Potential impacts on visual resources (Chapter 7.0, "Visual Resources")
- Potential conflicts with *Auburn State Recreation Area Interim Resource Management Plan* (Chapter 4.0, "Land Use")
- Need to address relationship to Cap-to-Cap Trail (Section 16.5, "Cumulative Impacts," in Chapter 16.0, "Other CEQA Sections")
- Adequacy of lines of sight for safety purposes (Chapter 3.0, "Project Description")
- Potential noise impacts (Chapter 10.0, "Noise")
- Potential impacts on vegetation and wildlife (Chapter 5.0, "Biological Resources")
- Potential traffic impacts on Ponderosa Way and at the proposed Ponderosa Way Staging Terminus (Chapter 8.0, "Transportation and Circulation")
- Potential increase in illegal activities and degradation of the area, including illegal camping, vandalism, littering, and illegal use of the trail by motorized vehicles (Chapter 14.0, "Recreation")
- Potential impacts on cultural resources (Chapter 6.0, "Cultural Resources")
- Potential issues related to consistency of land uses along the trail section between Upper Lake Clementine and Ponderosa Bridge (Chapter 4.0, "Land Use")

Visual simulations of the proposed trail were prepared to address concerns about potential visual/aesthetic impacts of the trail project and whether the trail could be visible from other parts of the canyon. These visual simulations are included in Chapter 7.0, "Visual Resources," of this DEIR. A geotechnical report was also prepared to address the potential effects of the project related to erosion and soils and geology. A discussion of the geotechnical study is presented in Chapter 11.0, "Soils, Geology, and Seismicity," of this DEIR and the geotechnical report is included as Appendix B.

Some comments presented at the scoping meeting and during the NOP review and comment period were focused on the cost of the trail and availability of funding for maintenance and patrol of the trail. As provided in law, CEQA analyses focus on the physical environmental effects of a project, not the social or economic effects, unless the social and economic effects lead indirectly to a physical change in the environment (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064[e]). The analyses included in Chapters 4.0 through 15.0 of this DEIR address both direct and indirect effects related to the potential physical effects of the project. Comments that address management issues (e.g., risks related to forest fires, vandalism, littering, and the potential use of motorized vehicles on the trail) are discussed in Chapter 3.0, "Project Description." Issues regarding funding for trail maintenance, repair, and policing are not addressed in this DEIR because they are not subject to the environmental review process. These are separate policy issues to be addressed by State Parks and the County.

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The DEIR uses several standard terms as follows:

- *North Fork American River Trail Project* is the proposed project, which would involve construction and maintenance of a multiple-use recreational trail along the southern slope of the North Fork American River canyon on land owned primarily by Reclamation and managed by State Parks under a cooperative agreement between State Parks and Reclamation.
- *Project area* is the 14.2-mile proposed trail alignment and the immediate vicinity, including the proposed staging termini.
- *No impact* means no change from existing conditions.
- *Less-than-significant impact* means no substantial adverse change in the physical environment (no mitigation needed).
- *Potentially significant impact* means a potential effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the environment (mitigation is recommended because potentially significant impacts are treated in the same way as significant impacts in the CEQA process).
- *Significant impact* means a substantial adverse change in the physical environment (consideration of feasible mitigation is required).
- *Significant and unavoidable impact* means a substantial adverse change in the physical environment that cannot feasibly be avoided, even with the implementation of mitigation.

1.7 PROJECT REVIEW AND CEQA PROCESS

1.7.1 AGENCY REVIEW AND CEQA PROCESS

This EIR will be used by the County and other agencies to fulfill the requirements of CEQA. It will also be used as an informational document by other federal, state, and local agencies that may have a direct interest in the project. The County has the principal responsibility for approving and carrying out the project, and for ensuring that the requirements of CEQA have been met; therefore, it is the lead agency under CEQA. The County is also the agency with the first discretionary action of the proposed project and is the primary source of funding.

A CEQA responsible agency is a state agency, board, or commission or any local or regional agency, other than the lead agency, that has a legal responsibility for reviewing, carrying out, or approving aspects of a project. Responsible agencies must actively participate in the lead agency's CEQA process, review the lead agency's CEQA document, and use the document when making a decision on project elements. State Parks has discretionary approval power over the project based on its role as land manager in the Auburn SRA (where the proposed project is located) under a cooperative agreement with Reclamation; therefore, State Parks is a responsible agency for the proposed trail project. The proposed trail would cross land owned by Reclamation and would require a right-of-entry permit; therefore, Reclamation is a responsible agency for the project. In addition, Reclamation is the NEPA lead agency for the proposed project.

Other federal responsible agencies that would issue permits on the proposed project or review the proposed project include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Potential state responsible agencies that would issue permits on or review the proposed project include the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Air Resources Board, State Office of Historic Preservation, California Department of Boating and Waterways, California Department of Conservation, California Department of

Forestry and Fire Protection, California Department of Transportation, California Department of Water Resources, California Highway Patrol, California Resources Agency, California State Lands Commission, Native American Heritage Commission, and State Water Resources Control Board. Local responsible agencies that are responsible for issuing permits or approvals for the project include the County Board of Supervisors, City of Auburn, and County Department of Public Works.

CEQA defines certain trustee agencies as those that have state-mandated responsibilities for natural resources that are held in trust for the people of the State of California (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15386). In addition to its role as a responsible agency for streambed alteration agreements, the California Department of Fish and Game is a trustee agency that has jurisdiction over natural resources in the state that could be affected by the project, including the state's fish and wildlife resources and designated rare or endangered native plants.

1.7.2 PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD

This DEIR is being distributed to agencies and individuals to ensure that interested parties have an opportunity to express their concerns about the potential environmental effects of the proposed project, and to ensure that information pertinent to project approval is provided to agency decision makers. The DEIR is being distributed for a 45-day review period through September 24, 2007. Comments on the DEIR should be sent to the following address no later than 5 p.m. on September 24, 2007:

Mr. Andy Fisher
Placer County Department of Facility Services
Parks and Grounds Division
11476 C Avenue
Auburn, CA 95603
(530) 889-6819

Comments may also be submitted by e-mail to <afisher@placer.ca.gov>. If comments are provided via e-mail, please include the project title in the subject line, attach comments in Microsoft Word format, and include the commenter's U.S. Postal Service mailing address.

The DEIR is available in electronic format on the Placer County Web site, <http://www.placer.ca.gov/>. Hard copies of the document are also available for review at the County office at the address listed above, and at the Auburn Library at the following address:

Auburn Library (Placer County Library District)
350 Nevada Street
Auburn, CA 95603

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT AND ALTERNATIVES

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED PROJECT

The North Fork American River Trail is a natural surface multiple-use trail proposed by the Placer County (County) Department of Facility Services for construction within the Auburn State Recreation Area (SRA). The County has the principal responsibility for approving and carrying out the proposed project and is the primary source and recipient of funding for the proposed project. The proposed project is a multiple-use trail that would begin at the confluence of the North and Middle Forks of the American River and end at the Ponderosa Bridge, approximately 14.2 miles upstream. The County, with input from a Trail Advisory Group (TAG) composed of local citizens and stakeholders such as equestrians, hikers, mountain bikers, and environmental organizations developed the objectives for the proposed North Fork American River trail project. Based on these objectives, the proposed trail alignment was flagged in the field, and is shown in the proposed *North Fork American River Trail, Trail Plan* (Trail Plan) (Placer County 2003a), which was prepared by the County in conjunction with State Parks. The tread width of the proposed trail alignment would generally be 6 feet.

The proposed project would include the following components:

- a 14.2-mile natural surface multiple-use trail accommodating hiking, biking and equestrian use;
- bridges and stream fords to accommodate stream crossings;
- two staging termini (Foresthill Road and Ponderosa Way);
- portable restroom;
- signage; and
- informational kiosks.

PROJECT LOCATION

The project area is located on the southern slope of the North Fork American River canyon in the Sierra Nevada foothills of Placer County, approximately 40 miles northeast of Sacramento. The termini of the proposed trail are logically placed at or near existing roads, so the proposed project would be a stand alone trail. The beginning of the proposed trail alignment is located near the confluence of the North and Middle Forks of the American River, approximately 3 miles northeast of the City of Auburn near Foresthill Road. The trail ends at the Ponderosa Bridge, approximately 14.2 miles upstream and 5 miles west of the town of Foresthill and southeast of Weimar. Interstate 80 (I-80) is located approximately 1.5 miles northwest of the proposed trail alignment and Foresthill Road is generally to the south. The proposed trail alignment is located at elevations of 800–1,200 feet above mean sea level (msl).

2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDED MITGATION

Information in Table 2-1, Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures, has been organized to correspond with the environmental issues discussed in Chapters 4.0 through 15.0 of this document. The summary table is arranged in four columns: environmental impacts; level of significance without mitigation; recommended mitigation measures; and level of significance with implementation of mitigation measures. Environmental impacts and mitigation measures are shown for the proposed project.

2.3 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Two alternatives, the No Project Alternative and the Original Alignment Alternative are evaluated in Chapter 16, "Other CEQA-Required Sections." Table 16-1 provides a comparison of the alternatives, and brief descriptions of each alternative are provided below.

NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE (ALTERNATIVE 1)

The No Project Alternative assumes that the proposed trail and associated facilities, including the corresponding staging termini, would not be constructed. Existing trails in the surrounding area would continue to be used for recreation, and access and recreational opportunities would be limited in the project area. The project area would continue to be managed under Reclamation contract by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) according to the *Auburn State Recreation Area Interim Resource Management Plan* (Auburn SRA IRMP) and the revised Auburn SRA General Plan (GP)/IRMP.

This alternative would not meet the demand for recreational facilities in Placer County, specifically hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian trails along the North Fork American River. Because no trail would be constructed under this alternative, the impacts associated with the proposed project on land use; biological resources; cultural resources; visual resources; transportation and circulation; air quality; noise; soils, geology, and seismicity; hydrology and water quality; public services; recreation; and hazardous materials and hazards would not occur. Because the proposed project would not have an impact on population, employment, housing, public utilities, or mineral resources, impacts on these resource areas under the No Project Alternative would be similar to those under the proposed project.

ORIGINAL ALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVE (ALTERNATIVE 2)

Under the Original Alignment Alternative, as proposed in the Initial Study/Environmental Assessment for the North Fork American River Trail, the trail would follow the same alignment as the proposed project, except for a portion of the proposed trail near Upper Lake Clementine Road. Under the Original Alignment Alternative, the trail would follow the canyon contour around the river bend upstream of Lake Clementine. This segment of trail would not climb higher up the canyon although it would for the proposed project, and it would not include switchbacks. Because the trail alignment under the Original Alignment Alternative would be similar to the proposed project trail alignment, the impacts associated with this alternative on land use; biological resources; cultural resources; visual resources; transportation and circulation; air quality; noise; public services; recreation; and hazardous materials and hazards would be similar to those under the proposed project. The Original Alignment Alternative would have increased impacts on soils, geology, and seismicity, and hydrology and water quality compared to the proposed project because the proposed project avoids steep slopes and high erosion areas.

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
4.0 Land Use			
4-1 Potential for Conflicts with Land Use Plans, Policies, or Regulations. Implementation of the proposed project would be consistent with relevant policies in the adopted planning documents pertinent to the project area.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
4-2 Alteration of Land Use and Potential Conflicts with Existing or Future Land Uses Adjacent to the Project Area. The proposed project would increase the use of the project area by the public. However, this increase in use would not cause a conflict with existing or future land uses in areas adjacent to the project area. The proposed land uses would be compatible with neighboring land uses.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
5.0 Biological Resources			
5-1 Potential Disturbance of Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog Habitat or Individuals. Although no foothill yellow-legged frogs were observed in the project area during the field surveys, potential habitat for the frogs does exist. Construction of the trail across drainages could degrade aquatic habitat or could result in physical injury to yellow-legged frog.	PS	**5-1: Protect Foothill Yellow-legged Frog.** The County and its primary construction contractor shall implement the following measures to reduce impacts on foothill yellow-legged frogs: ► Construction of the trail across drainages and streams shall occur when the drainages are dry, to the extent feasible. ► Guidelines shall be implemented to protect water quality and prevent erosion, as outlined in the best management practices (BMPs) in Chapter 3.0, "Project Description," and Mitigation Measure 11-2, "Obtain Authorization for Construction Activities with the Central Valley RWQCB and Implement Erosion and Sediment Control Measures as Required." ► If water is present during construction, disturbance to pools and slow runs with cobble-sized substrate shall be minimized. In particular, rocks shall not be collected from in-water environments from late March to early September to avoid disturbing foothill yellow-legged frog egg masses and tadpoles.	LTS

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
5-2 Potential Disturbance of Nests and Individual Raptors and Other Nesting Birds. Trees and other vegetation in and adjacent to the project area provide potential nest sites for raptors and migratory birds. Removal of trees or other vegetation during trail construction could destroy or disturb nests, resulting in loss of eggs or young.	PS	**5-2: Protect Raptors and Other Nesting Birds.** The County and its primary construction contractor shall implement the following measures to reduce impacts on raptors and other nesting birds: ► Limit removal of trees greater than 6 inches dbh to the greatest degree possible. If trees larger than 6 inches dbh must be removed, then the following mitigation measures shall be implemented: ► Tree removal shall be done in accordance with the Placer County Tree Ordinance. ► Before removal of trees during the non-breeding season, a qualified biologist shall inspect the tree for potential raptor nest, which are protected under Section 3503.5 of the California Fish and Game Code. If raptor nests are present and cannot be avoided, consult with DFG regarding appropriate measures for tree removal. If no nests are found, no further mitigation is required. ► If any construction activities, including tree removal, take place between March 1 and August 31, preconstruction surveys for active raptor nests shall be conducted prior to the beginning of construction. If any active raptor nests are identified during preconstruction surveys, then impacts to active raptor nests shall be avoided by the establishment of appropriate buffers and/or nest monitoring by a qualified wildlife biologist. ► Avoid construction within the buffer until the end of the breeding season and consult with DFG regarding alternative appropriate protection measures. The nest tree shall not be removed. ► Woody vegetation (e.g. small trees and shrubs) shall not be removed during the nesting season for raptors and migratory birds (i.e., March to August) to the extent feasible. If woody vegetation must be removed during the nesting season, the amount and extent to be removed shall be minimized to the extent feasible.	LTS

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
5-3 Potential Loss of Special-Status Plants. One special-status plant species, Brandegee's clarkia, was documented along the proposed trail alignment. Construction of the proposed trail could potentially disturb a population of Brandegee's clarkia.	PS	**5-3: Protect Special-Status Plants.** Note: Special-status plant surveys in support of the proposed project have been conducted along the entire alignment of the original and revised trail corridors; however, surveys of the new segment of the proposed trail alignment were completed during the non-blooming season. The only special-status plant species documented during these surveys is Brandegee's clarkia. Brandagee's clarkia is a CNPS list 2 species; it is not listed under the state or federal endangered species acts. Nevertheless, impacts to Brandagee's clarkia resulting from the proposed project would be considered significant under CEQA. Brandangee's clarkia is an annual species that is fairly common in the vicinity of the project site and appears to thrive on sites that have experienced some level of prior disturbance such as roadsides of along trails. The following mitigation measures shall be implemented to avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse effects on Brandagee's clarkia resulting from project implementation: ► The 2.3-mile new segment of the proposed trail alignment will be surveyed during the blooming season for Brandegee's clarkia prior to the start of construction. ► The locations of all known Brandegee's clarkia occurrences in the vicinity of the proposed trail alignment shall be clearly marked by a qualified biologist for avoidance by construction crews prior to the commencement of trail construction activities. ► Construction crews shall be alerted to the presence of Brandagee's clarkia in the vicinity of the proposed trail corridor, shall be shown maps of known locations and the methods used to identify populations in the field, and shall be asked to avoid these occurrences and a 25 foot buffer zone around them to the greatest extent possible. ► If complete avoidance of the populations is not feasible, the areas where occurrences would be impacted shall be minimized to the greatest extent feasible. ► In those areas where Brandagee's clarkia cannot be avoided, trail construction shall take place after the plants have	LTS

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
		completed their flowering cycles and set seed. ► A qualified biologist shall be present during trail construction in or near occurrences of Brandagee's clarkia and shall collect seeds from any occurrences of Brandagee's clarkia at those sites that will be impacted. Seeds collected shall be distributed immediately following collection in the immediate vicinity of the original site, but outside the construction footprint.	
5-4 Impacts on Waters of the United States. Installation of stream crossings and bridges and trail construction could result in fill of jurisdictional waters of the United States, including wetlands.	PS	**5-4: Protect Jurisdictional Waters of the United States.** Note: The wetland delineation completed in support of the proposed project in 2004 was submitted to and verified by the USACE. In addition, a nationwide permit for the proposed project has been obtained from USACE, and a water quality certification pursuant to Section 401 has been obtained from the Central Valley RWQCB. Both the wetland delineation and 401 permit will be resubmitted to the appropriate agencies to incorporate changes to the proposed trail alignment. The County and its primary construction contractor shall implement the following measures to reduce potential impacts on jurisdictional waters of the United States, including wetlands: ► Comply with the terms and conditions set forth in Nationwide Permit 42 obtained from USACE for the proposed project. ► Comply with the terms and conditions set forth in the Section 401 water quality certification. For a complete list of these terms see Chapter 3.0, "Project Description."	LTS
5-5 Streambed Alteration. Construction of the proposed trail would require crossing approximately 47 drainages. These crossings could alter the streambeds and adjacent vegetation of these drainages that are regulated by DFG.	PS	**5-5: Implement Conditions of Streambed Alteration Agreement.** Note: A Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement for the proposed project was obtained from DFG in August 2004. The County shall comply with the terms and conditions set forth in the Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement. Because of alignment changes and new drainages affected since the issuance of the 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement, the permit application will be resubmitted following the filing of the Notice of Determination for the proposed project, and any new conditions attached to the reissuance of the Streambed Alteration Agreement will be implemented.	LTS

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
5-6 Potential Introduction and Spread of Invasive Weeds. Several invasive weeds, including Himalayan blackberry, Italian thistle, and yellow starthistle, currently occur in the project area. Construction and use of the proposed trail has the potential to introduce additional invasive weed species or spread invasive weeds already in the project area. Introduction and spread of invasive weeds could reduce habitat quality.	PS	**5-6: Prevent the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Weeds.** The County shall implement the following measures to reduce potential impacts resulting from the introduction and spread of invasive weeds: ► A target list of invasive weeds with the potential to occur and be problematic in the project area shall be developed. This may be accomplished by reviewing the California Invasive Plant Council's "CalEPPC List," or list of invasive wildland weeds (2006); the California Department of Food and Agriculture's "Encycloweedia," or list of invasive weeds (2004); and by consulting knowledgeable individuals such as the resource ecologists employed by Reclamation and the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the County agricultural commissioner. ► The County shall ensure that any equipment used during construction is free of mud or seed-bearing material before such equipment enters the construction area. ► If populations of invasive weeds are documented in the construction area, they shall be eradicated prior to construction, preferably before they set seed. If eradication is infeasible, the population shall be clearly identified in the field by flagging and shall be avoided during construction to prevent spread. ► The County shall ensure that any fill soil, mulch, seeds, and straw materials used during construction and implementation of BMPs are weed-free. Certified weed-free material shall be used if available. ► Once the trail is constructed and open to the public, conduct periodic monitoring (at least once per year during the growing season) to ensure early detection and eradication of any invasive weed species brought in by users. Any populations detected during annual monitoring shall be treated and eradicated as soon as possible after detection, preferably before seeds set.	LTS

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
5-7 Conflict with Local Policies or Ordinances. The proposed project would not cause a conflict with any local policies or ordinances in the project area. There are no habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans; therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with any such plans.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
5-8 Impacts on Oak Woodland Habitat. The proposed project may result in the removal of some trees that are 6 inches dbh or larger from oak woodland habitat. Native oak trees are protected under the Placer County Tree Ordinance. Also, SB 1334, Statutes of 2004, requires County's to determine significance of conversion of oak woodland, and provide mitigation measures for significant effects.	PS	**5-8: Replacement of Native Oaks.** If removal of native trees larger than 6 inches dbh is required during construction of the proposed project, the County shall take measures to compensate for the removal of those trees consistent with the Placer County Tree Ordinance.	LTS
6.0 Cultural Resources			
6-1 Potential for Loss of or Damage to Potentially Significant Cultural Resources. Six unevaluated, although potentially significant, cultural resources have been documented within and immediately adjacent to the proposed trail alignment. The proposed project has the potential to destroy these cultural resources.	PS	**6-1: Realign Trail to Avoid Potentially Significant Cultural Resources.** To ensure that construction of the proposed trail avoids all significant documented cultural resources in the project area, the County shall realign the trail route as follows: ► The proposed trail shall be realigned at least 25 feet downslope from sites NF-4, NF-5, NF-7, and NF-8 to eliminate direct impacts and reduce the possibility of trail-related erosion and siltation. ► The proposed trail shall be realigned at least 25–50 feet upslope from the currently proposed trail alignment from the Ponderosa Bridge to approximately 2,000 feet downriver to avoid the historically mined bar (site NF-9) and associated features.	LTS

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
6-2 Potential for Disturbance of Known and Undiscovered Cultural Resources. The project vicinity is known to contain numerous historic and prehistoric resources. In addition, buried traces of historic-era activity and early Native American occupation that remain undocumented may be present within and in the vicinity of the proposed trail alignment. Ground-disturbing activities during trail construction could disturb these known and undiscovered cultural resources.	PS	**6-2: Protect Previously Unknown Cultural Resources.** If archaeological materials such as historic building or structure remains, artifact deposits or scatters, or prehistoric artifacts such as stone tool flaking debitage, mortars, pestles, shell, bone, or human remains are encountered during trail construction, all ground-disturbing activity in the area shall cease. A qualified cultural resources specialist shall be contacted to identify the materials, determine their possible significance, and formulate appropriate mitigation measures. Appropriate measures may include no action, avoidance of the resource through trail realignment, subsurface testing, and potentially data recovery.	LTS
6-3 Potential for Disturbance of Unknown Human Interments. Although no evidence of human interments was found in documentary research or the archaeological inventory, ground-disturbing activities during trail construction could adversely affect presently unmarked human interments.	PS	**6-3: Stop Potentially Damaging Work if Human Remains are Uncovered during Construction.** In accordance with the California Health and Safety Code, if human remains are uncovered during ground-disturbing activities, the contractor and/or the County shall immediately halt potentially damaging excavation in the area of the burial and notify the County Coroner and a professional archaeologist to determine the nature of the remains. The coroner is required to examine all discoveries of human remains within 48 hours of receiving notice of a discovery on private or state lands (Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5[b]). If the coroner determines that the remains are those of a Native American, he or she must contact the NAHC by phone within 24 hours of making that determination (Health and Safety Code Section 7050[c]). Following the coroner's findings, the property owner, contractor or County, an archaeologist, and the NAHC-designated Most Likely Descendent (MLD) shall determine the ultimate treatment and disposition of the remains and take appropriate steps to ensure that additional human interments are not disturbed. Upon the discovery of Native American remains, the procedures above regarding involvement of the County Coroner, notification of the NAHC, and identification of a MLD shall be followed. The County shall ensure that the immediate vicinity (according to generally accepted cultural or archaeological standards and practices) is not damaged or disturbed by further development activity until consultation with the MLD has taken place. The MLD	LTS

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
		shall have 48 hours to complete a site inspection and make recommendations after being are granted access to the site. A range of possible treatments for the remains, including nondestructive removal and analysis, preservation in place, relinquishment of the remains and associated items to the descendents, or other culturally appropriate treatment may be discussed. State Assembly Bill (AB) 2641 suggests that the concerned parties may extend discussions beyond the initial 48 hours to allow for the discovery of additional remains. AB 2641(e) includes a list of site protection measures and states that the County shall comply with one or more of the following: ► Record the site with the NAHC or the appropriate Information Center ► Utilize an open-space or conservation zoning designation or easement ► Record a document with the county in which the property is located The County or their authorized representative shall rebury the Native American human remains and associated grave goods with appropriate dignity on the property in a location not subject to further subsurface disturbance if the NAHC is unable to identify a MLD or the MLD fails to make a recommendation within 48 hours after being granted access to the site. The County or their authorized representative may also re-inter the remains in a location not subject to further disturbance if they reject the recommendation of the MLD, and mediation by the NAHC fails to provide measures acceptable to the landowner. Adherence to these procedures and other provisions of the California Health and Safety Code and AB 2641(e) will reduce potential impacts to human remains to a less-than-significant level.	

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
7.0 Visual Resources			
7-1 Temporary Changes in Visual Resources Associated with Trail Construction. Construction activity, construction equipment, and small areas of vegetation removal would be temporarily visible during and immediately following construction of the proposed trail. However, these changes in views would be minimal. All views of trail construction would be temporary.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
7-2 Long-term Changes in Visual Resources Associated with the Proposed Trail. The proposed project would introduce new physical elements into the landscape; however, the proposed trail is designed to avoid visually obtrusive effects and would be revegetated after construction. After 1 year of vegetation growth, the proposed trail alignment would not be visible from the KOPs.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
7-3 Changes in Views from Scenic Vistas. SR 49, Foresthill Road, and the North Fork American River have been identified as scenic vistas in the project area. The proposed trail alignment would not be visible from Foresthill Road or the American River, and only the existing portion of the trail is visible from SR 49. The Foresthill Bridge Staging Terminus would be visible from Foresthill Road; however, this staging terminus would be consistent with the character of the surrounding area.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
7-4 Potential Conflict with Wild and Scenic Eligibility of the North Fork American River. The section of the American River between Clementine Dam and the intake of the Auburn Dam diversion tunnel has been deemed eligible for listing as a recreational river under the Wild and Scenic River Act. The proposed project would be consistent with a recreational classification and would not have a significant impact on any of the outstandingly remarkable values of the river.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
8.0 Transportation and Circulation			
8-1 Temporary Increase in Traffic during Construction. During construction of the proposed trail, local roadways would experience an increase in traffic from daily commutes by construction workers. However, this increase in traffic would be temporary and is not expected to be substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
8-2 Increase in Traffic with Use of the North Fork Trail. The proposed trail would not be sufficiently different from other multiple-use trails in the Auburn SRA to create its own demand. However, the proposed trail may redirect trail users from other trails in the area to the immediate project area. Visitors traveling to the Auburn SRA would use the surrounding roadways regardless of which recreational facility they will be using.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
8-3 Increase in Traffic Hazards Associated with Construction Vehicles. Construction vehicles entering the road could cause an increase in traffic hazards in the project area. Site plans would include measures for safety that would reduce these hazards.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
8-4 Increase in Traffic Hazards Associated with Use of Staging Termini. Trucks and trailers entering and exiting Foresthill Road and Ponderosa Way from the proposed staging termini could cause an increase in traffic hazards in the project area. The staging termini would be designed to include measures for safe ingress and egress of trucks and trailers.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
8-5 Adequacy of Parking for Trail Users. Although there would be increased demand for parking at trail access points, adequate parking would be provided to accommodate this increase in demand.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
8-6 Potential Interference with Emergency Response Routes. The proposed trail would have several access points that would provide adequate access for emergency response vehicles and personnel.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
9.0 Air Quality			
9-1 Short-Term Construction-Generated Emissions of ROG, NO_X, and PM_{10}. Site preparation and other trail construction activities would result in the temporary generation of ROG, NO_X, and PM_{10} emissions. However, daily unmitigated emissions of ROG, NO_X, and PM_{10} would not exceed PCAPCD's significance thresholds.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
9-2 Long-Term Operational (Regional) Emissions of ROG, NO_X, and PM_{10}. Implementation of the proposed project may result in area-source emissions from trail landscape maintenance activities and could result in additional vehicle trips on local roadways from an increase in visitors to the trail. However, long-term operational emissions would not violate an air quality standard, contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation, expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, or conflict with PCAPCD's air quality planning efforts.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
9-3 Exposure of Sensitive Receptors to Toxic Air Contaminant Emissions. Construction of the proposed trail would result in short-term emissions of diesel exhaust from on-site heavy-duty equipment. However, the use of mobilized equipment would be temporary (approximately 2% of the exposure period) and would combine with the highly dispersive properties of diesel PM; furthermore, no sensitive receptors are located within 2 miles of the site. Therefore, short-term construction activities would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. In addition, the long-term use and maintenance of the proposed trail would not require the use of any major stationary sources of TAC emissions.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
9-4 Long-Term Operational (Local) Mobile-Source Emissions of Carbon Monoxide. The proposed project could result in additional vehicle trips on local roadways from an increase in visitors to the trail. However, a majority of such vehicle trips would be anticipated to be generated by current visitors of the Auburn SRA. Long-term operational emissions of CO would not be anticipated to violate or contribute substantially to an air quality violation.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
9-5 Exposure of Sensitive Receptors to Odor Emissions. Construction of the proposed trail would result in emissions of diesel exhaust from on-site construction equipment. However, these emissions would be intermittent and temporary and would dissipate rapidly from the source with an increase in distance.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
10.0 Noise			
10-1 Short-Term Construction-Generated Noise Levels. Short-term exterior noise levels at the closest existing noise-sensitive receptor could exceed 47 dBA without feasible noise controls, which would exceed the applicable County nighttime standard of 45 dBA. However, construction activities would occur only during daytime hours. Resulting exterior noise levels at the closest noise-sensitive receptor would not exceed the County daytime noise standard of 55 dBA, nor would they reflect a substantial increase in ambient noise.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
10-2 Increases in Long-Term (Operational) Stationary- and Area-Source Noise Levels. Area-source noise may result from trail landscape maintenance activities. However, exterior noise levels at the closest existing noise-sensitive receptor (2 miles away) would not exceed 20 dBA. Such noise levels would not exceed any of the applicable County daytime or nighttime noise standards, nor would ambient noise levels substantially increase at nearby existing noise-sensitive receptors.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
10-3 Increases in Short- and Long-Term Traffic-Generated Noise Levels. Construction, use, and maintenance of the proposed trail would not result in a noticeable change in the traffic noise contours of area roadways. In addition, noise increases associated with construction traffic would be temporary and would occur during the less noise-sensitive daytime hours. Thus, short- and long-term traffic-generated noise levels would not exceed applicable Placer County noise standards or substantially increase ambient noise at nearby existing noise-sensitive receptors.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
10-4 Exposure of Persons to or Generation of Excessive Groundborne Vibration or Noise Levels. Vibration levels associated with on-site construction equipment would not exceed Caltrans's recommended standard for the prevention of structural damage and FTA's maximum-acceptable vibration standard with respect to human annoyance for residential uses. In addition, long-term use and maintenance of the proposed trail would not include any vibration sources. Thus, the proposed project would not result in the exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
11.0 Soils, Geology, and Seismicity			
11-1 Construction-Related Erosion Hazards. Based on soil types and topography, the excavation and grading of soil could result in erosion during project construction, particularly during periods of strong winds or storm events.	PS	**11-1: Obtain Authorization for Construction and Operation Activities with the Central Valley RWQCB and Implement Erosion and Sediment Control Measures as Required.** The County and/or the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) shall design a drainage system for erosion control that incorporates the use of BMPs. Erosion and stormwater control shall be designed and implemented in accordance with the latest edition of the erosion and sediment control guidelines for developing areas of the Sierra Nevada foothills and mountains (HSRCOD 1991). BMPs for erosion and siltation prevention, as described in Chapter 3.0, "Project Description," of this document and developed in the trail plan, would be implemented along the trail. Because of the small size of the staging areas and the implementation of these	LTS

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
		design features, the proposed project is not anticipated to have significant effects on water quality. The County shall comply with the terms and conditions set forth in the Section 401 water quality certification obtained from the Central Valley RWQCB. Because of alignment changes and new drainages affected since the issuance of the 401 certification, this permit will be resubmitted following the filing of the Notice of Determination and any new conditions attached to that permit will be incorporated into the project. As required under the NPDES stormwater permit for general construction activities, the County shall prepare and submit the appropriate notices of intent and shall prepare any other necessary engineering plans and specifications for pollution prevention and control. The County will prepared a SWPPP that identifies and specifies the use of erosion and sediment control BMPs, means of waste disposal, implementation of approved local plans, nonstormwater management controls, permanent postconstruction BMPs, and inspection and maintenance responsibilities. The SWPPP shall also specify the pollutants that are likely to be used during construction that could be present in stormwater drainage and nonstormwater discharges. A sampling and monitoring program shall be included in the SWPPP that meets the requirements of SWRCB Order 99-08-DWQ to ensure that the BMPs are effective. Construction techniques shall be identified that would reduce the potential for runoff, and the plan shall identify the erosion and sedimentation control measures to be implemented. The SWPPP shall also specify spill prevention and contingency measures, identify the types of materials used for equipment operation, and identify measures to prevent or clean up spills of hazardous materials used for equipment operation and hazardous waste. Emergency procedures for responding to spills shall also be identified. BMPs identified in the SWPPP shall be used in all subsequent site development activities. The SWPPP shall identify personnel training requirements and procedures that would be used to ensure that workers are aware of permit requirements and proper installation and performance inspection methods for BMPs specified	

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
		in the SWPPP. The SWPPP shall also identify the appropriate personnel responsible for supervisory duties related to implementation of the SWPPP. All construction contractors shall retain a copy of the approved SWPPP on the construction site.	
11-2 Risks to People from Naturally Occurring Asbestos. Disturbance of naturally occurring asbestos fibers could create a health hazard. However, the project area is not located in an area that is likely to contain naturally occurring asbestos.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
11-3 Risks to People and Structures Caused by Strong Seismic Ground Shaking. The foothills of the Sierra Nevada are characterized by extremely low seismicity. However, four notable earthquakes have been reported in the northern Sierra Nevada. In addition, the area does have the potential to be affected by shock waves resulting from earthquakes in western and eastern Placer County, and in more distant areas that display greater seismic activity. Ground shaking could cause structural damage to permanent improvements proposed as part of the project.	PS	**11-2: Implement Recommended Measures to Reduce the Potential for Exposure to Seismic Hazards.** A geotechnical report for the proposed project has been prepared (Blackburn Consulting 2006, 2007) (Appendix C) that evaluates the potential for various geologic and seismic-related hazards. During project design and construction, all measures outlined in the geotechnical report for the proposed project (Blackburn Consulting 2006, 2007) (Appendix C) and, if necessary, supplemental site-specific geotechnical recommendations shall be implemented to ensure that the proposed trail alignment and bridge crossings are safe. It is the responsibility of the County to provide for engineering inspection and certification that earthwork has been performed in conformity with recommendations contained in the report.	LTS
11-4 Risks to People and Structures Caused by Landsliding. Field review of the proposed trail alignment noted several areas of shallow slope instability and/or small landslide areas. Although landsliding does not appear to be a current problem for the project area, stable conditions may be changed by slope alterations from cuts or fills, and by changes to drainage patterns.	PS	**11-2: Implement Recommended Measures to Reduce the Potential for Exposure to Seismic Hazards.** (See Mitigation Measure 11-2, above).	LTS

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
12.0 Hydrology and Water Quality			
12-1 Potential for Short-Term Construction-Related Soil Erosion and Water Quality Impairment. Implementation of the proposed project could cause short-term water quality degradation associated with construction activities. Areas from which duff and vegetation have been removed could be subject to erosion from rain and wind. In addition, accidental spills of construction-related contaminants could occur during construction activities in the project area. Both of these mechanisms could carry soil and construction-related contaminants to intermittent drainages before they are ultimately discharged to the North Fork American River.	PS	**11-1: Obtain Authorization for Construction and Operation Activities with the Central Valley RWQCB and Implement Erosion and Sediment Control Measures as Required.** (See Mitigation Measure 11-1, above).	LTS
12-2 Potential for Long-Term Soil Erosion and Water Quality Impairment. Implementation of the proposed project could cause long-term water quality degradation associated with use of the proposed trail and extreme weather events. Areas from which duff and vegetation have been removed could be subject to erosion from rain and wind. These mechanisms could carry soil into intermittent drainages before they are ultimately discharged to the North Fork American River.	PS	**11-1: Obtain Authorization for Construction and Operation Activities with the Central Valley RWQCB and Implement Erosion and Sediment Control Measures as Required.** (See Mitigation Measure 11-1, above).	LTS
13.0 Public Services			
13-1 Potential Reduction in Emergency Response Times. The proposed project may cause an increase in demand for emergency services. However, adequate access to the proposed trail would be provided for emergency vehicles. Therefore, current emergency response times are not expected to be reduced.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
13-2 Increase in Demand for Police Services. Use of the proposed trail may increase demand for police services in the project area. However, an increase in demand is expected to occur in the project area regardless of implementation of the proposed project. This increase in demand is expected to be proportional to the increase in population in the surrounding	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
area. The proposed project is not expected to significantly increase the demand for police services in addition to increases already occurring due to population increases.			
13-3 Increase in Demand for Fire Services. Use of the proposed trail may increase demand for fire services in the project area. However, any increase in demand is expected to occur in the project area regardless of implementation of the proposed project. This increase in demand is expected to be proportional to the increase in population in the surrounding area. The proposed project is not expected to significantly increase the demand for fire services in addition to increases already occurring due to population increases.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
13-4 Increase in Maintenance of Public Facilities. Construction of the proposed trail and associated components would create more facilities that would need to be maintained by the County. The amount of maintenance required for the proposed trail and associated components is expected to be small.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
14.0 Recreation			
14-1 Increased Demand for Recreational Facilities. The proposed trail would be constructed in response to existing demand from population increases and would not create additional demand for recreational facilities. The proposed trail would not be sufficiently different from other trails in the project area to create its own demand. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not cause a significant increase in demand for additional recreational facilities.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
14-2 Increase in Wildlife Attacks as a Result of Increased Recreational Use. The proposed trail would introduce more trail users into a fairly remote area of the North Fork American River canyon, which could increase the number of encounters with wildlife. However, wildlife attacks on humans are rare. In addition, informational signage on wildlife safety would be posted at the staging termini to educate trail users.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
14-3 Increased Degradation of Existing or Proposed Recreational Facilities. The proposed trail may redirect trail users from other areas of the Auburn SRA to the project area, thereby increasing recreational use in the immediate project area. Redirecting trail users from other trails in the Auburn SRA would reduce degradation of those trails. Because the proposed trail would not cause a significant increase in demand, it would not cause degradation of existing trails. While regular trail use by equestrians and bicyclists could cause degradation of the proposed trail, routine maintenance of the trail would be performed to address this issue.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
14-4 Potential for Conflicts between Trail Users. Because the proposed trail is a multiple-use trail, the potential exists for conflicts between pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists. The proposed project includes measures to minimize the occurrence of these potential conflicts, including a 6-foot wide trail width and informational signage.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
14-5 Increase in Unauthorized Activities in the Project Area. The proposed trail may increase the number of visitors to the Auburn SRA, which could increase the occurrence of unauthorized activities in the project area. However, the increase in users as a result of the proposed trail is expected to be minimal, and the project area would be patrolled by State Parks' rangers.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS

Table 2-1
Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
15.0 Hazardous Materials and Hazards			
15-1 Potential for Fire to Occur During or After Construction. The project area has been identified as an extreme fire hazard area. Sparks from construction and maintenance equipment could generate fire risks in this area. Trail users could also generate fire risks (e.g., from discarded cigarette butts) along the proposed trail; however, the County would follow the General Fire Prevention Requirements described above in Section 15.2.3, which would maintain the risk of wildfires at a less-than-significant level.	LTS	No mitigation is required.	LTS
15-2 Potential for Release of Hazardous Materials During Trail Construction or Maintenance. Trail construction and maintenance equipment may require the use of small amounts of hazardous materials. The proposed project would comply with all applicable federal and state regulations pertaining to handling of hazardous materials and worker health and safety; however, accidental spills or other releases of small amounts of hazardous materials could still occur in an otherwise pristine, undeveloped area during construction or maintenance of the proposed trail.	PS	**15-1: Implement Measures to Reduce Hazards Associated with Potential Hazardous Materials Releases.** Mitigation Measure 15-1 applies to Impact 15-2. It would be implemented in conjunction with Mitigation Measure 11-1, "Obtain Authorization for Construction and Operation Activities with the Central Valley RWQCB and Implement Erosion and Sediment Control Measures as Required," described in Chapter 11.0, "Soils, Geology, and Seismicity." Before the commencement of trail construction, the County shall implement the following measures. ► An accidental-spill prevention and response plan shall be prepared and implemented for storage and use of hazardous materials during trail construction and maintenance. This plan shall identify measures to prevent accidental spills from leaving the site and methods for responding to and cleaning up spills before neighboring properties are exposed to hazardous materials. ► The County shall ensure that any employee handling hazardous materials is trained in the safe handling and storage of hazardous materials and trained to follow all applicable regulations with regard to such hazardous materials. ► The primary construction contractor shall identify a staging area where hazardous materials will be stored during construction in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations.	LTS

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The North Fork American River Trail is a multiple-use trail proposed by the Placer County (County) Department of Facility Services for construction within the Auburn State Recreation Area (SRA). The County has the principal responsibility for approving and carrying out the proposed project and is the primary source and recipient of funding for the proposed project. This chapter provides information on the project location; project background and history; objectives of the project; trail-specific parameters such as the proposed trail alignment and features, construction techniques, interpretive and signage elements of the trail, staging termini and public access, and trail maintenance; and permitting requirements. Alternatives to the proposed project are presented in Chapter 16.0, "Other CEQA-Required Sections."

3.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The project area is located on the southern slope of the North Fork American River canyon in the Sierra Nevada foothills of Placer County, approximately 40 miles northeast of Sacramento (Exhibit 3-1). The termini of the proposed trail are logically placed at or near existing roads, so the proposed project would be a stand alone trail. The beginning of the proposed trail alignment is located near the confluence of the North and Middle Forks of the American River, approximately 3 miles northeast of the City of Auburn near Foresthill Road. The trail ends at the Ponderosa Bridge, approximately 14.2 miles upstream and 5 miles west of the town of Foresthill and southeast of Weimar. Interstate 80 is located approximately 1.5 miles northwest of the proposed trail alignment and Foresthill Road is generally to the south. The proposed trail alignment is located at elevations of 800–1,200 feet above mean sea level (msl).

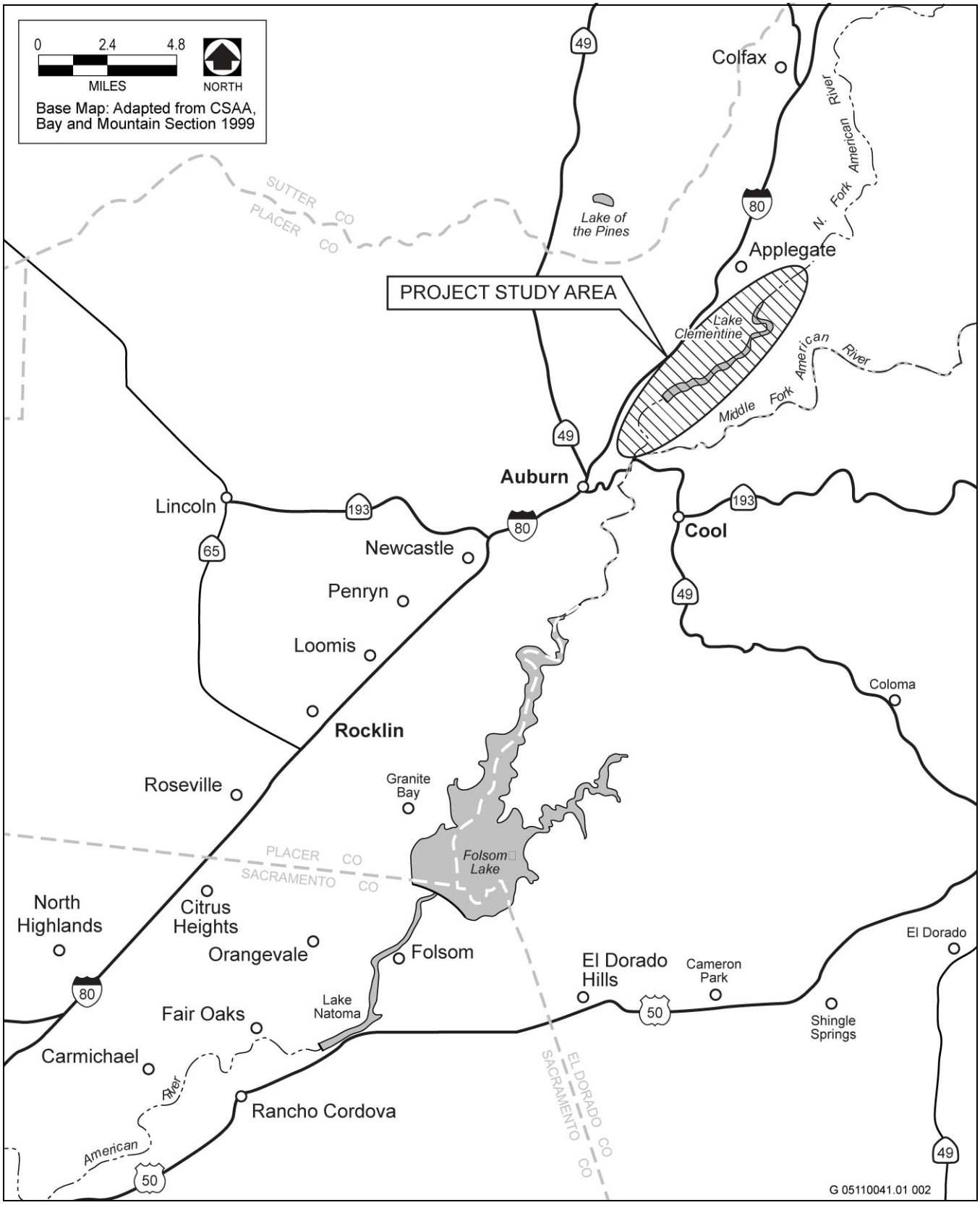
3.2 STUDY AREA CHARACTERISTICS

The proposed trail traverses the open space of the Auburn SRA, which is managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) as part of the State Park system under a contract with the property owner, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). The Auburn SRA stretches from Auburn to Colfax along the North Fork of the American River and from Auburn to Georgetown along the Middle Fork of the American River and is made up of the lands originally set aside for Reclamation's Auburn Dam project lands. This natural area offers a variety of recreational activities; among the most popular are hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding. Other activities occurring within the Auburn SRA are whitewater rafting, endurance racing, hunting, kayaking, boating, swimming, fishing, camping, gold panning, and off-highway motorcycle riding (within specified boundaries).

3.3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Objectives represent the overarching goals and purpose of a proposed project, and are typically used as a screening tool in evaluating project alternatives. The County, with input from a Trail Advisory Group (TAG) composed of local citizens and stakeholders such as equestrians, hikers, mountain bikers, and environmental organizations, has developed the following objectives for the proposed North Fork American River Trail project.

- Provide access to the North Fork American River canyon within the Auburn SRA to a wide variety of users.
- Route the trail to discourage informal connections to the lake/river.
- Allow multiple nonmotorized uses along the trail.
- Reduce visibility of trail from river/lake.
- Minimize environmental impacts of trail construction, including the avoidance of sensitive areas.
- Promote safe grades and safe alignments.
- Connect to staging termini (Foresthill Road and Ponderosa Way).
- Provide connections to existing trails.
- Ensure emergency access to trail.



Source: EDAW 2006

Vicinity Map **Exhibit 3-1**

- Minimize conflicts with private property.
- Design an alignment to minimize conflicts with trail users.

3.4 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project is a multiple-use trail within the Auburn SRA that would begin at the confluence of the North and Middle Forks of the American River and end at the Ponderosa Bridge, approximately 14.2 miles upstream. The proposed trail alignment is based generally on objectives determined by the TAG, flagged in the field, and shown in the proposed *North Fork American River Trail, Trail Plan* (Trail Plan) (Placer County 2003a), which was prepared by North Fork Associates on behalf of the County, in conjunction with State Parks. The information presented below summarizes the physical features of the proposed project.

3.4.1 PROPOSED TRAIL ALIGNMENT

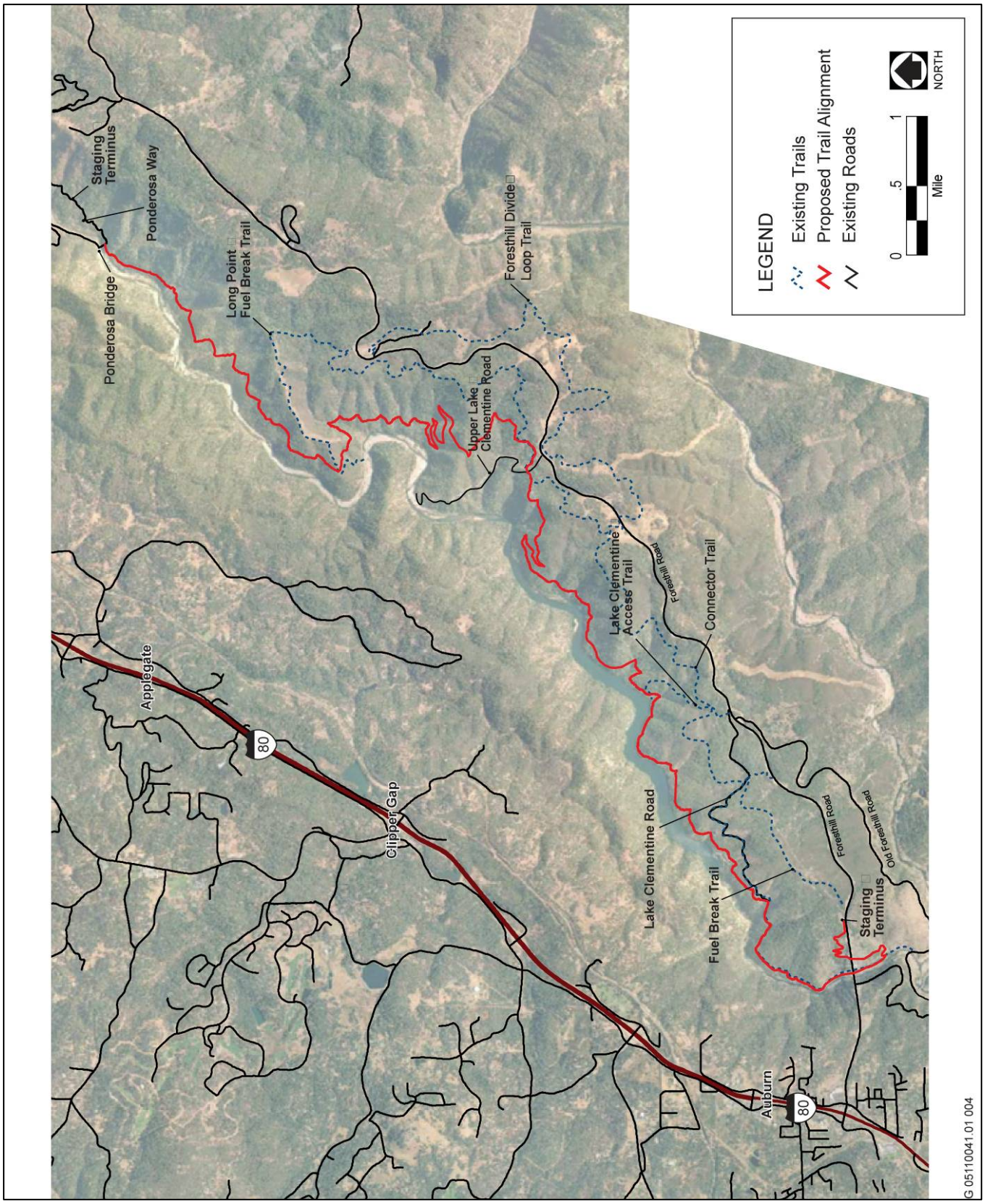
The proposed North Fork American River Trail has been divided into five trail segments as follows, from east (upstream) to west (downstream) (Placer County 2003a):

- Segment 1: Ponderosa Bridge to the Long Point Fuel Break Trail (approximately 3.1 miles)
- Segment 2: Long Point Fuel Break Trail to Upper Lake Clementine Road (approximately 3.2 miles)
- Segment 3: Upper Lake Clementine Road to the Lake Clementine Access Trail (approximately 3.8 miles)
- Segment 4: Lake Clementine Access Trail to Lake Clementine Road (approximately 2.3 miles)
- Segment 5: Lake Clementine Road to the North Fork/Middle Fork American River confluence (confluence) (approximately 1.8 miles)[1]

The approximate alignment of the proposed trail is shown in red in Exhibit 3-2. The proposed trail alignment was developed as part of the proposed Trail Plan, in which the TAG used a set of evaluation criteria to site the trail; these criteria closely follow many of the project objectives listed above. The TAG reached consensus on routing the trail on the south side of the canyon and approved the proposed trail route. The south side of the canyon was chosen based on several challenges on the north side of the canyon, such as sparser vegetation that would make the trail more visible, private property, and lack of connections to existing trails. See Chapter 16.0, "Other CEQA Sections," for more details. The proposed trail alignment would provide sufficient physical separation from the river to deter users from forging their own trails down to the river. To the extent possible, the proposed trail alignment would follow the contours of the canyon to minimize grades, discourage erosion from water velocity on steep profiles, and protect natural resources.

The County used standard procedures (Parker 2004) for design and construction of the proposed trail. County trail planners delineated the proposed trail alignment by walking and scouting the entire length of the project area for the most suitable route. During these initial field surveys, the trail was staked along an alignment that avoids profile grades greater than 10%, large rock outcrops, trees larger than 6 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh), and potential cultural resource sites. The proposed trail alignment was also delineated based on recommendations in the geotechnical report written by Blackburn Consulting (2007) for the proposed project (Appendix B), and it was designed to avoid high-erosion areas. Wherever feasible, the trail surface has a grade of less than 10%, and it mostly passes on the high side of trees to reduce construction-related damage to root structure. Minor adjustments may be made to the final proposed trail alignment to avoid sensitive resources, make use of natural features, and incorporate grade reversals.

[1] This segment is already constructed.



Source: North Fork Associates 2003, Placer County 2006

Proposed Trail Alignment (Approximate) **Exhibit 3-2**

Segments 1–4 of the proposed trail represent new trail construction that would supplement existing trails in the Auburn SRA. Segment 5 of the proposed trail alignment, between Lake Clementine Road and the confluence, consists of the existing Lake Clementine Trail, an abandoned construction access road that also provides emergency access. An approximately 1,500-foot unimproved section of this trail segment may be widened to 10 feet to allow emergency vehicles enhanced access to the popular portion of the river between Lake Clementine Road and the confluence of the North and Middle Forks of the American River.

3.4.2 TRAIL CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES

Both hand and mechanical construction techniques would be used to build the proposed trail. One or more crews from the California Conservation Corps, inmate crews, licensed contractors, volunteers, and/or County staff would be used to construct the trail and to build ancillary features such as retaining walls, creek fords, staging termini, and bridges.

Vegetation clearing along the trail corridor before construction would be performed by hand. Vegetation removal would be minimized within the trail corridor to the extent possible; however, up to 15 feet may be cleared where needed to promote safe lines of sight. The trail corridor would be cleared of vegetation to a height of 10 feet to accommodate equestrian use. The proposed trail route would be excavated to minimize the removal of native trees greater than 6 inches dbh. During trail clearing, limbs would be cut flush with the tree trunk. All cut vegetation would be chipped and broadcast, or lopped and scattered, within the project area.

The tread width of the proposed trail alignment (i.e., the actual surface on which trail users actively place feet, hooves, wheels, etc.) would generally be 6 feet, but may vary as needed based on geologic and safety considerations. Full-bench construction techniques would be used, meaning that soil generated by excavation would not be considered part of the tread width. The trail tread would be excavated using a Sweco trail dozer, mini excavator, hand construction, and/or other machinery capable of conforming to the dimensional requirements of the trail. Dips and undulations in the design would follow the natural drainage patterns to facilitate effective surface flow of water off the trail tread.

Because of the steep side slopes and the need to support equestrian traffic, the entire trail would be cut out of the hillside. The trail would have several “outslopes” that would vary depending on the grade of the trail and soil conditions. Outsloping is the grading of a trail so that the outside edge is lower than the inside, which allows water to drain off the trail instead of flowing down the trail, which can cause erosion. As a general rule, more outslope is required with increasing grade.

3.4.3 STREAM CROSSINGS AND DRAINAGE FEATURES

The proposed trail would cross approximately 47 ephemeral streams. Generally, new bridges and other structures would be avoided because of their high construction and maintenance costs; natural stream crossings or fords would be implemented wherever possible. However, five of the stream crossings would require the construction of bridges because of the size of the streams in these locations. Important factors in bridge construction are the seasonal water levels in the drainage and the bank configuration of the stream.

Bridges would be constructed of timber, fiberglass, steel, composite material, or a combination of those materials. Abutments would be constructed of concrete or timber. Handrails would be 52 inches high and decks would be approximately 60 inches wide.

Rock-lined stream crossings would be used on the remaining creeks. Rocks would be placed in the streambed to armor the stream banks and to provide a reasonably level surface. The trail would descend to and ascend from the streambed. At the creek fords, the approaching trail grade must be higher than the stream grade to prevent water from escaping the streambed and flowing down the trail. All rocks used for stream crossings would be gathered on-site.

Drain dips would be used throughout the alignment to reduce water volume traversing the trail tread when the volume of surface water runoff exceeds the amount of runoff that a normal outslope design can accommodate. Drain dips are exaggerated outslopes that terminate in a shallow trough. Features such as natural contours, side slopes, and trail grades would be studied closely to determine where the largest volume of water can be intercepted and diverted from the trail. Soil types, vegetative cover, and downstream slopes would be considered when selecting the drain point or trough outflow location. When feasible, drain dips would be located where natural swales or drainages bisect the trail.

3.4.4 BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR EROSION AND SILTATION PREVENTION

To minimize the effects of trail construction as it relates to soil transportation and erosion, a storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) is being prepared in accordance with Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) procedures. A SWPPP provides the plans and specifications for best management practices intended to prevent and control erosion and siltation to the extent feasible. SWPPPs are described in Chapter 11.0, "Soils, Geology, and Seismicity," and Chapter 12.0, "Hydrology and Water Quality."

3.4.5 SUPERVISION/QUALITY CONTROL

A trail coordinator/technical supervisor overseeing the proposed project would flag the final trail route within the proposed trail corridor. Following approval, crews would attend orientation/training sessions to safely construct the trail using Trail Plan Standards (Placer County 2003a). The on-site trail coordinator would ensure that the trail standards are followed and would provide a source for technical advice on the construction of retaining systems, stream fords, and bridges.

3.4.6 INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM

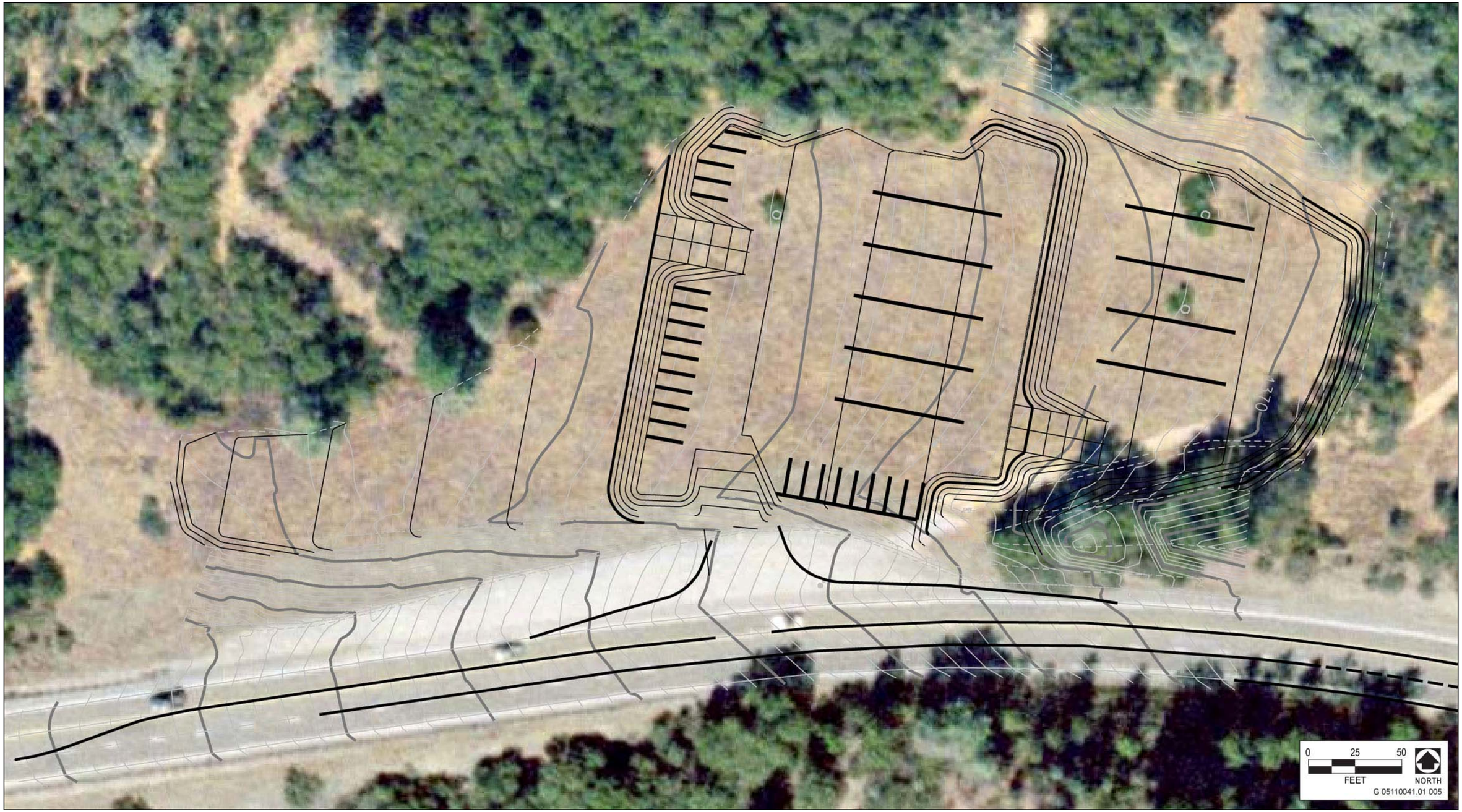
The proposed trail includes an interpretive program. As part of this program, self-guided informational signage would be provided to inform area visitors of natural, cultural, and physical features encountered along the proposed trail alignment. Although trail use alone lends itself to an active recreation experience, this can be enhanced with the education of trail users on the more subtle features of the canyon environment. The County would consult with State Parks and Reclamation regarding the content and design of interpretive materials and facilities.

3.4.7 SIGNS, FENCES, AND GATES

The trail is designed to be barrier free, but a deterrent to motorized vehicles is required. This would be addressed by the installation of walk-throughs or stiles at trail entrances and intersections with roads. As described below, a 6-foot cyclone fence is proposed at the Foresthill Bridge Staging Terminus to corral any runaway horses and prevent them from running into traffic.

3.4.8 STAGING TERMINI AND PUBLIC ACCESS

Staging termini would be constructed at each end of the proposed trail alignment. An equestrian staging terminus would be constructed near the confluence approximately 200 yards east of the Foresthill Bridge. The entrance to the new equestrian staging terminus along Foresthill Road would conform to the design standards of the County. The Foresthill Bridge Staging Terminus would consist of a series of pads. The lowest pad would be used as an area to tie up horses and locate restrooms. The upper pads would be used for parking and unloading. Parking stalls would be approximately 28 feet by 70 feet (Exhibit 3-3). The equestrian staging terminus would be enclosed with a 6-foot cyclone fence, and a new gate would be installed. State Park Trail Standards require either a gravel or dirt surface for equestrian facilities. An informational kiosk would be installed at the Foresthill Bridge Staging Terminus to provide information about the trail, such as trail etiquette, safety, and educational information.



Source: CH2MHill 2006

Proposed Foresthill Bridge Staging Terminus **Exhibit 3-3**

Kiosk design and posted information would be reviewed and approved by State Parks. Hitching posts and a portable or CXT vault toilet restroom with two stalls would also be installed at this location; however, no source of running or potable water would be provided.

At the east end of the proposed trail alignment, an additional multiple-use staging terminus would be constructed on Ponderosa Way, approximately 400 yards east of the Ponderosa Bridge on the south side of the canyon. The area would be constructed by cut and fill of a road bank and a ledge below the roadway. Some trees and vegetation would be removed before grading. After final grading, the staging terminus would be approximately 150 feet long and 100 feet wide. A surface of three-quarter-inch road base would be spread on the surface. An informational kiosk that would provide information on the trail would be installed. A portable restroom would continue to be provided at this location; however, no source of running or potable water would be provided (Exhibit 3-4).

In addition to the two formal staging termini, there are additional areas along Foresthill Road that could provide access to the proposed trail. One alternative access point is a parking area on Lake Clementine Road, near the intersection of Foresthill Road. A second access point is from the paved parking lot at the entrance to Upper Lake Clementine. Upper Lake Clementine Road would be open only when allowed by State Parks' operational policies.

3.4.9 TRAIL LINKAGE AND EMERGENCY ACCESS

There are four multiple-use trails within the Auburn SRA that would link to the proposed trail: the Fuel Break Trail, the Clementine Loop Trail, the Lake Clementine Access Trail, Foresthill Divide Loop, and the Long Point Fuel Break Trail. Although the Long Point Fuel Break Trail is designated a multiple-use trail, because of its alignment crossing private property, it is essentially a hiking trail. No changes to the nearby trail designations are proposed as part of the proposed project. In addition, three existing roads could provide emergency access to the proposed trail: Old Foresthill Road at the confluence, Lake Clementine Road, and Upper Lake Clementine Road. The trail section below the Foresthill Bridge leading to Clark's Hole may be widened, as a separate project, to 10 feet to accommodate access by emergency vehicles.

3.4.10 CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

The trail segments described in Section 3.4.1, "Proposed Trail Alignment," were originally designed to facilitate construction and funding. They would be constructed in accordance with environmental constraints as described below.

Construction of all trail segments would require approximately 3 years, assuming a 12-person crew that works 7-hour days (Wells, pers. comm., 2004). Multiple crews could be used to reduce the estimated time to completion.

Because of the climate of the project area, several tasks would need to be scheduled with consideration of the weather. Construction on stream crossings (rock armored fords) would be avoided if water is present in the stream channel. Vegetation clearing would be scheduled in the nonbreeding season for raptors (September to March) or outside nesting areas documented by preconstruction surveys conducted by a qualified biologist. Bridges would be built during dry periods of the year. An approximately 6-month rest period after trail construction is desirable so that soil and materials can settle and compact before the trail opens to the public.

3.4.11 LONG-TERM TRAIL MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The proposed trail would be designed to be as low-maintenance as possible, and should not require annual maintenance during the first 3 years of use. The County would be responsible for long-term maintenance of the proposed trail and staging termini. State Parks would manage the trail in accordance with the existing *Auburn State Recreation Area Interim Resources Management Plan* (Auburn SRA IRMP) and the future Auburn SRA General Plan (GP)/IRMP.

Maintenance activities including brushing, vegetation control, and removal of slough would be performed by County staff or volunteers, and maintenance would occur annually or as needed. Localized, hand-sprayed herbicide or mechanical or manual vegetation removal would be required along the trail tread for the first year to prevent vegetation from overgrowing the tread. Additional maintenance may be required as a result of weather-related events (e.g., removal of downed trees and slide removal), routine wear from equestrians and mountain bikers, and unauthorized activities such as vandalism. Depending on the bridge materials used (i.e., wood, steel, or fiberglass) the bridges would require routine maintenance about every 8–10 years (Wells, pers. comm., 2006). State Parks currently employs four rangers who patrol the Auburn SRA. The project area would be included in the area patrolled by these State Park rangers (Galloway, pers. comm., 2006).

3.5 INTENDED USES OF THIS EIR

An environmental impact report (EIR) analyzes the environmental effects of a project, indicates ways to reduce or avoid potential environmental effects resulting from the project (i.e., mitigation measures), and identifies alternatives to the project that are also capable of avoiding or reducing project-related impacts. An EIR must also disclose significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided, growth-inducing effects, significant cumulative impacts, and effects found not to be significant. The purpose of an EIR is not to recommend approval or denial of the project, but to provide information to aid the public and decision makers/permitting agencies in the decision-making process.

3.5.1 REQUIRED PERMITS AND APPROVALS

Permits and approvals are required from the following federal, state, and local agencies for the construction of the proposed trail:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley RWQCB)
- California Department of Fish and Game (DFG)
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) right-of-entry permit
- County Department of Public Works (Encroachment permit for entrance to Foresthill Road Staging Area)
- State Office of Historic Preservation

These permits and approvals are discussed below.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

It is anticipated that fill would be placed in jurisdictional waters of the United States as part of the proposed project; therefore, a Section 404 permit from USACE is required. An application for a Section 404 permit was submitted to USACE on June 23, 2004. On November 17, 2004, Nationwide Permit 42 for Recreational Facilities was issued pursuant to this application. Nationwide Permit 42 serves as compliance with the federal Clean Water Act for dredge and/or fill activities related to the construction of the trail, specifically the stream crossings and bridge installations. The issuance of Nationwide Permit 42 covers the discharge of up to 0.5 acre or 300 linear feet of material into streams. Because the total amount of discharge would not exceed these limits, an Individual Permit from USACE is not required. After this permit was issued the trail was realigned, resulting in placement of fill in two new drainage crossings and avoiding placement of fill into four previously included drainage crossings. Therefore, an amendment to Nationwide Permit 42 will be requested.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

If the proposed project has the potential to affect federally listed threatened or endangered species, Section 7 consultation is required under the federal Endangered Species Act. Section 7(a)(2) requires consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that the proposed project would not jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species. Based on the biological investigations and field surveys performed for this EIR, it is unlikely

Source: CH2MHill 2006

Proposed Ponderosa Way Staging Terminus

Exhibit 3-4

that this project would affect any federally listed species (see Chapter 5.0, "Biological Resources"). If a federally listed species is found in the project area, the County in conjunction with USACE would initiate Section 7 consultation and would proceed through the Section 7 process.

CENTRAL VALLEY REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD

The proposed project may have the potential to degrade water quality of other waters of the United States as regulated by the Central Valley RWQCB. An application for Section 401 certification was submitted to the Central Valley RWQCB on August 25, 2004, and a Section 401 certification was issued on April 3, 2007. The Section 401 certification application may be resubmitted because of the changes in the trail alignment that resulted in a difference in drainage impacts (as described above). The following is a list of conditions of the certification issued on April 3, 2007:

- Placer County Department of Facility Services shall notify the Board in writing of the start of any in-water activities.
- Except for activities permitted by USACE under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, soil, silt, or other organic materials shall not be placed where such materials could pass into surface water or surface water drainage courses.
- The discharge of petroleum products or other excavated materials to surface waters is prohibited.
- Activities shall not cause turbidity increases in surface waters to exceed:

    a. where natural turbidity is between 0 and 5 Nephelometric Turbidity Units (NTUs), increases shall not exceed 1 NTU;

    b. where natural turbidity is between 5 and 50 NTUs, increases shall not exceed 20 percent;

    c. where natural turbidity is between 50 and 100 NTUs, increases shall not exceed 10 percent;

    d. where natural turbidity is greater than 100 NTUs, increases shall not exceed 10 percent.

Except that these limits will be eased during in-water working periods to allow a turbidity increase of 15 NTU over background turbidity a measured in surface waters 300 feet downstream from the working area. In determining compliance with the above limits, appropriate averaging periods may be applied provided that beneficial uses will be fully protected.

- Activities shall not cause settleable matter to exceed 0.1 milliliters/liter in surface waters as measured in surface waters 300 feet downstream from the project.
- Activities shall not cause visible oil, grease, or foam in the work area or downstream.
- All areas disturbed by project activities shall be protected from washout or erosion.
- In the event that project activities result in the deposition of soil materials or creation of a visible plume in surface waters, monitoring shall be conducted immediately upstream and 300 feet downstream of the work site and the results reported to the Board within two weeks.
- Placer County Department of Facility Services shall notify the Board immediately if the above criteria for turbidity, settleable matter, oil/grease, or foam are exceeded.

- Placer County Department of Facility Services shall notify the Board immediately of any spill of petroleum products or other organic or earthen materials.

- Placer County Department of Facility Services complies with all Department of Fish and Game 1600 requirements for the project as required.

- Placer County Department of Facility Services must obtain coverage under the NPDES General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activities issued by the SWRCB.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

It is anticipated that the proposed project would affect streams and/or adjacent riparian habitat; therefore, a Streambed Alteration Agreement from DFG is required pursuant to Section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code. An application for a Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement was submitted to DFG on September 29, 2004. A Streambed Alteration Agreement was issued by DFG on October 18, 2004, pursuant to this application. The Streambed Alteration Agreement application may be amended because of the changes in the trail alignment that resulted in a difference in drainage impacts (as described above). The following is a list of conditions of the October 18, 2004 permit:

- Work in the stream zone shall be conducted between June 1 and November 15 pursuant to the terms of this agreement.

- DFG shall be notified if conflicts exist between the provisions of the Streambed Alteration Agreement and those imposed by other regulatory agencies.

- A copy of the Streambed Alteration Agreement shall be given to the contractor(s) working within the stream zone of this project.

- DFG shall be notified within 2 working days of beginning work within the stream zone.

- When work in a flowing stream is unavoidable, the entire stream flow shall be diverted around or through the work area during the excavation and/or construction operations. Stream flow shall be diverted using gravity flow through culverts/pipes or pumped around the work site with the use of hoses. When any dam or other artificial obstruction is being constructed, maintained, or placed in operation, sufficient water shall at all times be allowed to pass downstream to maintain aquatic life.

- Precautions to minimize turbidity/siltation shall be taken into account during project planning and implementation.

- If DFG determines that turbidity/siltation levels resulting from project-related activities constitute a threat to aquatic life, activities associated with the turbidity/siltation shall be halted until effective DFG-approved control devices are installed.

- Raw cement/concrete or washings thereof, asphalt, paint or other coating material, oil, or other petroleum products, or any other substances that could be hazardous to aquatic life, resulting from project-related activities, shall be prevented from contaminating the soil and/or entering the waters of the state.

- During construction, the contractor shall not dump any litter or construction debris within the stream zone.

- All exposed/disturbed areas and access points within the stream zone left barren of vegetation as a result of the construction activities shall be restored to its natural state by seeding with a blend of native and nonnative erosion control grass seeds.

All conditions of the Streambed Alteration Agreement will be adhered to and DFG will be provided with a copy of the updated CEQA documentation.

If the proposed project has the potential to affect a state-listed, special-status species, consultation under the California Endangered Species Act would be required. For direct or indirect impacts on state-listed species, an Incidental Take Permit would be required under Section 2081 of the Fish and Game Code. If the state-listed species is also federally listed, a consistency determination would be required under Section 2080.1 of the Fish and Game Code. However, based on biological investigations and field surveys performed for this EIR, it is unlikely that the proposed project would affect any state-listed species (see Chapter 5.0, "Biological Resources").

PLACER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

An encroachment permit from the County Department of Public Works would be required for the staging termini located adjacent to County roads (Foresthill Road).

STATE OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines contain provisions specifically addressing the protection of cultural resources. The Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), headed by the SHPO, is responsible for administration of federally mandated and state-mandated historic preservation programs in California. Federal agencies must initiate consultation with the SHPO as part of the NHPA Section 106 review process. The State Historical Resources Commission, also headed by the SHPO, determines the eligibility of historic and archaeological resources for listing on the NRHP and the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR). The Native American Heritage Commission identifies and catalogs places of special religious or social significance to Native Americans and known graves and cemeteries of Native Americans on private lands, and performs other duties regarding the preservation and accessibility of sacred sites and burials and the disposition of Native American human remains and burial items. EDAW on behalf of Reclamation initiated the consultation process with appropriate Native American groups (see Section 6.3.1 "Native American Consultation"). Reclamation has initiated consultation with SHPO for the proposed project.

3.5.2 OTHER AGENCIES USING THE EIR AND CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

This EIR will be used by the County and CEQA responsible agencies to fulfill the requirements of CEQA. It will also be used as an informational document by federal agencies that could have permitting or approval authority for the project and by other local and state agencies, including CEQA trustee agencies that may have an interest in the project. See Chapter 1.0, "Introduction," for detail on the lead, responsible, and trustee agencies for the proposed project.

Consultation with these responsible and trustee agencies as well as Native American interests is ongoing. As described in Chapter 6.0, "Cultural Resources," consultation was initiated with representatives of Native American groups during early planning phases for the project. Because the project area could be of cultural significance to Native Americans, representatives from local Native American tribes were consulted before any field surveys and ground-disturbing activities. Representatives from the Todd Valley Miwok-Maidu Cultural Foundation, United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria, and Rose Enos, an independent representative of the Maidu/Washoe, were all contacted by letter, with requests for information on sacred or sensitive resources within the project area. The Native American Heritage Commission was also contacted concerning the proposed project.

The following is a list of entities that may use this EIR for discretionary or informational purposes:

FEDERAL AGENCIES

- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

STATE AGENCIES

- California Air Resources Board
- California Department of Boating and Waterways
- California Department of Conservation
- California Department of Fish and Game, Region 2
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
- California Department of Parks and Recreation
- California Department of Transportation, District 3
- California Department of Water Resources
- California Highway Patrol
- State Office of Historic Preservation
- California Resources Agency
- California State Lands Commission
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Native American Heritage Commission
- State Water Resources Control Board

LOCAL AGENCIES

- City of Auburn
- Placer County Board of Supervisors
- Placer County Department of Public Works

4.0 LAND USE

This chapter evaluates the environmental impacts from implementation of the proposed project on existing land uses. A description of the existing site characteristics and setting is followed by an analysis focused on the relationship between the project and existing plans and policies, and the relationship with proposed on-site and existing adjacent land uses.

4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.1.1 PROJECT AREA

The project area is located on the southern slope of the North Fork American River canyon in Placer County, approximately 40 miles northeast of Sacramento (Exhibit 3-1). The proposed trail alignment is located in the Auburn State Recreation Area (SRA) on land owned by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) under a memorandum of understanding. The beginning of the proposed trail alignment is located at the North Fork/Middle Fork American River confluence (confluence), approximately 3 miles northeast of the City of Auburn near Foresthill Road (Exhibit 3-2). The trail ends at the Ponderosa Bridge, approximately 14.2 miles upstream and southwest of Weimar. Approximately the first 1.8 miles of the proposed trail alignment is already in place, as it coincides with the existing Lake Clementine Trail between the confluence and Lake Clementine Road. Land use designations and zoning for the project area, as described by applicable planning documents, are discussed in detail below.

PLACER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The general designation for the project area in the *Placer County General Plan* (Placer County 1994) is Resource Protection. This designation encompasses areas identified as important open space lands within Placer County, such as national forest, U.S. Bureau of Land Management lands, or other public lands specifically reserved or proposed for watershed preservation, outdoor recreation, wilderness or wildlife/environmental preserves; areas of existing and potential mountain, water-oriented, public, and commercial recreational use; and areas suitable for the development and operation of water-oriented, public, and private recreational and commercial uses and facilities. Typical land uses allowed include low-intensity agricultural, public recreational uses with structural development restricted to accessory structures necessary to support the primary allowed uses, parks, camping facilities, ski and other resort facilities, launching areas, marinas, and supporting commercial uses. The *Placer County General Plan* defers specific land use designations in the project area and in its vicinity to the *Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap General Plan* (described below).

PLACER COUNTY ZONING

In the Placer County Zoning Ordinance the project area is zoned as Water Influence (W), Water Influence with a Mineral Reserve combining district (W-MR), and Farm with Building Site (20 acre minimum) and Mineral Reserve combining districts (F-BX-MR 20 acre minimum). The purpose of the Water Influence (W) district is to identify areas suitable for the development and operation of water-oriented, public and private recreational and commercial uses and facilities. Allowable land uses in the Water Influence District are mining, parks, playgrounds, golf courses, sports facilities, outdoor public assembly, harbor facilities, and marinas. The purpose of the Farm (F) district is to provide areas for commercial agricultural operations that can also accommodate necessary services to support agricultural uses, together with residential land uses at low population densities. Allowable land uses in the Farm district are agriculture, forestry, grazing, mining, community centers, libraries, museums, parks, playgrounds, golf courses, rural recreation, schools, and single-family dwellings.

The zoning and combining districts are used to address special needs or characteristics of the areas of Placer County to which they are applied, such as potential hazards and/or land use conflicts created by aircraft overflight,

flooding, unique community character, or visual quality. Combining districts applicable to the proposed trail alignment are Mineral Reserve (-MR) and Building Site (-B). Section 17.52.110 of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance describes the purpose of the -Mineral Reserve combining district as follows:

> The purpose and intent of the Mineral Reserve (-MR) combining district is to identify lands that may contain valuable mineral resources, protect the opportunity for the extraction and use of such resources from other incompatible land uses, to provide for the extraction of mineral resources and the reclamation of lands subsequent to such extraction, so as to maintain the economic viability of mining while minimizing adverse impacts to the environment, public health, safety and welfare.

Section 17.52.040 of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance describes the purpose of the Building Site combining district as follows:

> The purpose and intent of the Building Site (-B) combining district is to provide for different parcel sizes in new subdivisions than would otherwise be required by an applicable zone district, based upon special characteristics of the site or area to which the combining district is applied, including but not limited to sensitive environmental characteristics, limited resource capacities, and community character.

WEIMAR-APPLEGATE-CLIPPER GAP GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The area covered by the *Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap General Plan* (Placer County 1980), which was adopted by the County in 1981, includes 32 square miles in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. The *Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap General Plan* provides goals and policies that guide future development patterns to focus on preserving and enhancing the rural character of the area. Limitations are placed on commercial and industrial growth, directing development to less environmentally sensitive areas (Reclamation 1992).

The land use designation for the project area in the *Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap General Plan* is Water (Placer County 1980). Property in this designation includes existing lakes and the proposed Auburn Dam area. Consistent with the plan's land use designations, the plan area is subject to the zoning designations of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance. Compatible zoning designations are Single Family Residential, Farm, Agricultural Residential, Industrial, Open Space, Forestry, and Water Influence (Placer County 1980).

FORESTHILL GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Approximately 1,000 feet of the east end of the proposed trail alignment at the Ponderosa Way Staging Terminus is within the *Foresthill General Plan* area. The *Foresthill General Plan* (Placer County 1981) encompasses approximately 56 square miles. The land use designation for the project area in the *Foresthill General Plan* is Water Influence (Placer County 1981). Similar to the *Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap General Plan*, land use designations of the *Foresthill General Plan* are subject to the zoning designations of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance. Compatible zoning designations are Single Family Residential, Farm, Agricultural Residential, Industrial, Open Space, and Forestry (Placer County 1980).

FORESTHILL DIVIDE COMMUNITY PLAN

In August 2003, the County prepared the draft *Foresthill Divide Community Plan* (Community Plan) and accompanying draft environmental impact report. The Community Plan area comprises approximately 109 square miles in the foothills of the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. The Community Plan area is generally bounded by the North Fork American River, Shirttail Canyon, the watershed of Sugar Pine Reservoir, and Elliott Ranch Road on the west and north; the west branch of El Dorado Canyon on the east; and the North Fork of the Middle

Fork American River and the Middle Fork American River on the south. No specific date has been set for adoption of the Community Plan.

AUBURN STATE RECREATION AREA INTERIM RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

A General Plan for the Auburn SRA was developed in 1978 and designed to manage the area after the completion of the Auburn Dam. A series of events have led to the indefinite postponement of construction of the Auburn Dam; therefore, the *Auburn State Recreation Area Interim Resource Management Plan* (Auburn SRA IRMP) (Reclamation 1992) was developed to guide the use, development, and management of the Auburn SRA during the interim management period. The Auburn SRA IRMP provides planning goals and an implementation plan with specific constraints and limitations (see Section 4.2.3, "Local Plans, Policies, Regulations, and Ordinances," below). The Auburn SRA IRMP is currently under revision, and the revised Auburn SRA General Plan (GP)/IRMP will update the existing Auburn SRA IRMP when adopted.

Because the construction of the Auburn Dam Project was not completed within the time period originally anticipated, Reclamation continues to hold, protect, and preserve the project lands for authorized project purposes, including ecological, recreational, and cultural benefits in a manner compatible with Public Law 89-69, 79 State. 615. Development activities, such as trail construction, may be permitted with appropriate disclaimers that the project would only proceed in the recognition that the developed areas would be temporary features that may be removed or destroyed when construction of the Auburn Dam Project continues.

4.1.2 ADJACENT LAND USES

The land use designation and zoning (described in detail above) for adjacent land uses are as follows:

- The general designation in the *Placer County General Plan* for land adjacent to the project area is Resource Protection.
- In the Placer County Zoning Ordinance land adjacent to the project area is zoned as Water Influence (W), Water Influence with a Mineral Reserve combining district (W-MR), and Farm with Building Site (20 acre minimum) and Mineral Reserve combining districts (F-BX-MR 20 acre minimum).
- The land use designation in the *Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap General Plan* for areas adjacent to the project area is Water (Placer County 1980).
- The land use designation in the *Foresthill General Plan* for areas adjacent to the project area is Water Influence (Placer County 1981).

The project area is surrounded by the open space of the Auburn SRA in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Undeveloped land dominated with natural vegetation lies to the east, west, and south of the project area. Lake Clementine and Interstate 80 are to the north of the proposed trail alignment, and Foresthill Road is to the south.

4.2 REGULATORY SETTING

4.2.1 FEDERAL PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS

AUBURN STATE RECREATION AREA INTERIM RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Auburn SRA IRMP contains the following broad management guideline relevant to land use in the project area.

- Any land use proposal made prior to the completion of the Auburn Dam shall meet one of the following four criteria:

    - It is directly associated with the authorized construction of the Auburn Dam or the California State Parks Auburn Reservoir Project General Plan.

    - It is for the purpose of fish and wildlife mitigation or enhancement.

    - It provides for cultural or historic preservation or mitigation.

    - It provides for safe public use and recreational opportunities associated with the resource.

The Auburn SRA IRMP also contains the following specific management guidelines relevant to land use in the project area.

- Facilities planned for the Auburn SRA must not be permanent, due to the fact that construction of the Auburn Dam would cause inundation of any facilities built below the reservoir level.

- Trails within the Auburn SRA are not limited to those shown on the trails map. New trails may be permitted with approval of the administrative agency. New and existing trails should conform to other IRMP and the Auburn SRA guidelines.

4.2.2 STATE PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS

California Government Code Section 65300 et seq. establishes the obligation of cities and counties to adopt and implement general plans. The general plan is a comprehensive, long-term, and general document that describes plans for the physical development of a city or county and of any land outside its boundaries that, in the city's or county's judgment, bears relation to its planning. The general plan addresses a broad range of topics, including, at a minimum, land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. In addressing these topics, the general plan identifies the goals, objectives, policies, principles, standards, and plan proposals that support the city's or county's vision for the area. The general plan is a long-range document that typically addresses the physical character of an area over a 20-year period. Finally, although the general plan serves as a blueprint for future development and identifies the overall vision for the planning area, it remains general enough to allow for flexibility in the approach taken to achieve the plan's goals.

The State Zoning Law (Government Code Section 65800 et seq.) establishes that zoning ordinances, which are laws that define allowable land uses within a specific district, are required to be consistent with the general plan and any applicable specific plans. When amendments to the general plan are made, corresponding changes in the zoning ordinance may be required within a reasonable time to ensure that the land uses designated in the general plan would also be allowable by the zoning ordinance (Government Code Section 65860[c]).

4.2.3 LOCAL PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND ORDINANCES

PLACER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

The *Placer County General Plan* (1994) describes assumptions, goals, and planning principles that provide a framework for land use decisions throughout the county. It is based on the belief that Placer County will experience continued growth and economic development because of its desirable climate, physical setting, plentiful resources, and proximity to the Sacramento metropolitan area.

The land use designations of the *Placer County General Plan* for the project area are described in Section 4.1.1, above. The following are the relevant goals and policies identified by the *Placer County General Plan* for land use:

- **GOAL 1.G:** To designate land for and promote the development and expansion of public and private recreational facilities to serve the needs of residents and visitors.
- **Policy 1.G.2.** The County shall strive to have new recreation areas located and designed to encourage and accommodate non-automobile access.
- **Policy 1.G.3.** The County shall continue to require the development of new recreational facilities as new residential development occurs.

PLACER COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE

The Placer County Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 17 of the Placer County Code, was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in July 1995 (Edition No. 1). The Zoning Ordinance, Eighth Edition, was revised in July 2001. The Placer County Zoning Ordinance, which is consistent with the *Placer County General Plan*, regulates the use of land, buildings, and structures, and establishes minimum regulations and standards for the development of land within Placer County. Zoning for the project area is described in Section 4.1.1 above.

WEIMAR-APPLEGATE-CLIPPER GAP GENERAL PLAN

The *Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap General Plan* contains the following goal and policy relevant to land use in the project area.

- **GOAL:** To preserve valuable open space lands in order to maintain the natural features of the area.
- **Policy 1.** Preserve all natural areas along creeks and canals.

FORESTHILL GENERAL PLAN

The *Foresthill General Plan* contains the following goal relevant to land use in the project area:

- **GOAL:** To preserve and enhance the rural character of the Foresthill area.

4.3 IMPACTS

4.3.1 ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

The focus of this analysis is on land use impacts that would result from project implementation. Evaluation of potential land use impacts of the proposed project was based on a review of the planning documents pertaining to the project area (the *Placer County General Plan*, Placer County Zoning Ordinance, *Placer County Trails Master Plan*, *Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap General Plan*, *Foresthill General Plan*, and Auburn SRA IRMP); consultation with appropriate agencies; and field review of the project area and surroundings.

Specific impacts and project consistency issues associated with biological resources; cultural resources; visual resources; transportation and circulation; air quality; noise; soils, geology, and seismicity; hydrology and water quality; public services; and recreation are addressed in each technical chapter of this DEIR as appropriate.

4.3.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on the Placer County California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Checklist and the State CEQA Guidelines, the proposed project would result in a potentially significant impact on land use if it would:

- conflict with general plan/community plan/specific plan designations or zoning, or policies contained within such plans;
- conflict with applicable environmental plans or policies adopted by responsible agencies with jurisdiction over the project;
- be incompatible with existing land uses in the vicinity;
- affect agricultural and timber resources or operations (e.g., impacts on soils or farmlands and timber harvest plans, or impacts from incompatible land uses);
- disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community (including a low-income or minority community); or
- result in a substantial alteration of the present or planned land use of an area.

As mentioned in Section 1.2.2, the proposed project would have no effect on agricultural resources. Furthermore, none of the land in the project area is in agricultural production or in timber resource operations; therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with existing agricultural or timber operations. No habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan is currently in effect for the project area. The proposed project would therefore not conflict with any such plan. A portion of the North Fork American River is classified "wild" under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (National System); however, the designated reach ends 1,000 feet upstream of the Colfax–Iowa Hill Bridge, which is not within the project area (Friends of the River 2004). In addition, there are no residences located along the proposed trail alignment, and the proposed project would not physically divide an established community. Because the proposed project would have no impact on these thresholds, they are not discussed further in this chapter.

4.3.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

IMPACT 4-1	Land Use – Potential for Conflicts with Land Use Plans, Policies, or Regulations. *Implementation of the proposed project would be consistent with relevant policies in the adopted planning documents pertinent to the project area.*
Significance	*Less Than Significant*
Mitigation Proposed	*None Warranted*
Residual Significance	*Less Than Significant*

As stated in the thresholds listed above in Section 4.3.2, "Thresholds of Significance" (derived from the Placer County CEQA Checklist and Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines), the proposed trail alignment would result in a significant impact on the environment if it would conflict with general plan/community plan/specific plan designations or zoning, or policies contained within such plans; or if it would conflict with applicable environmental plans or policies adopted by responsible agencies with jurisdiction over the project. Therefore, this

analysis focuses on the relationship between the proposed project and existing plans and policies and the relationship with proposed on-site land uses.

The proposed project is consistent with the general land use designation in the *Placer County General Plan* of Resource Protection. Allowable land uses under this designation include public recreational uses, with structural development restricted to accessory structures necessary to support the primary allowed uses. Specific land use designations are deferred by the *Placer County General Plan* to the *Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap General Plan*.

The land use designation for the project area in the *Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap General Plan* is Water. Property in this designation includes existing lakes and the proposed Auburn Dam area. Compatible designations in the Placer County Zoning Ordinance are Single Family Residential, Farm, Agricultural Residential, Industrial, Open Space, Forestry, and Water Influence. The proposed trail is consistent with the policies and land use designations of the *Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap General Plan* because Water Influence is a designation in the project area which allows for construction of water-oriented, public and private recreational and commercial uses and facilities. Because the proposed project would be a recreational facility it would be compatible with the allowed uses within the Water Influence designation.

The land use designation for the project area in the *Foresthill General Plan* is Water Influence. Compatible land uses for this designation and zoning are Single Family Residential, Farm, Agricultural Residential, Industrial, Open Space, and Forestry. The proposed trail alignment would be considered a consistent land use because Water Influence is a designation in the project area which allows for construction of water-oriented, public and private recreational and commercial uses and facilities. Because the proposed project would be a recreational facility it would be compatible with the allowed uses within the Water Influence designation.

Land use designations in the *Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap General Plan* and *Foresthill General Plan* are subject to the zoning designations of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance. The proposed trail alignment and its use for hiking, biking, and equestrian activities would be consistent with the land use types allowed by the current zoning designations and districts (Water Influence [W], Water Influence with a Mineral Reserve combining district [W-MR], and Farm with Building Site [20 acre minimum] and Mineral Reserve combining districts [F-BX-MR 20 acre minimum]) for the reasons discussed above.

A trail alignment similar to the proposed trail alignment is identified in the Auburn SRA IRMP as a hiking only trail; however, the Auburn SRA IRMP states that the trails within the Auburn SRA are not necessarily limited to those proposed in the IRMP (Reclamation 1992). In addition, the proposed trail alignment would be recognized as a temporary feature that may be removed or destroyed if construction of the Auburn Dam continues. The proposed trail alignment is located at elevations of approximately 800–1,200 feet above mean sea level (msl). The level of inundation, if any, would depend on the spillway elevation of a constructed dam. The *Auburn Dam EIS* identified a dam with a spillway elevation of 985 feet above msl, and the *American River Watershed Project, California, Supplemental Information Report, Detention Dam* identified a dam with a spillway elevation of 942 feet above msl. Portions of the proposed trail alignment would be inundated under both of these alternative dam elevations; however, there is currently no approved plan for the Auburn Dam.

Implementation of the proposed project would be consistent with adopted planning documents pertinent to the project site: the *Placer County General Plan*, the Placer County Zoning Ordinance, the Auburn SRA IRMP, and the *Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap General Plan*. Therefore, this impact is considered less than significant.

IMPACT 4-2	Land Use – Alteration of Land Use and Potential Conflicts with Existing or Future Land Uses Adjacent to the Project Area. *The proposed project would increase the use of the project area by the public. However, this increase in use would not cause a conflict with existing or future land uses in areas adjacent to the project area. The proposed land uses would be compatible with neighboring land uses.*
Significance	*Less Than Significant*
Mitigation Proposed	*None Warranted*
Residual Significance	*Less Than Significant*

The project area is surrounded by the open space of the Auburn SRA in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Undeveloped land dominated by natural vegetation lies to the east, west, and south of the project area. Because the project area is currently surrounded by open space and undeveloped land, the proposed trail alignment would not conflict with existing adjacent land uses.

Land uses adjacent to the project area are designated as Resource Protection by the *Placer County General Plan*; zoned as Water Influence (W), Water Influence with a Mineral Reserve combining district (W-MR), and Farm with Building Site (20 acre minimum) and Mineral Reserve combining districts (F-BX-MR 20 acre minimum) by the Placer County Zoning Ordinance; designated as Water by the *Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap General Plan*; and designated as Water Influence by the *Foresthill General Plan*. Compatible land uses for these designations and zoning are discussed above in Impact 4-1. The land uses adjacent to the project area would be consistent with these planning documents and the proposed trail would avoid crossing private property.

No conflicts with adjacent land uses would result from implementation of the proposed project. Therefore, this impact is considered less than significant.

4.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures are necessary.

5.0 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This chapter describes the existing biological resources that could be subject to project-related disturbance. This discussion includes descriptions of habitat types, common wildlife species, and special-status species that may occur in the project area. This chapter also addresses impacts of the proposed project on biological resources and recommends mitigation measures to address those impacts.

5.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

5.1.1 PLANT COMMUNITIES AND AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS

Plant communities and aquatic ecosystems in the project area include woodland, chaparral, drainages, and wetland seep. Each of these is briefly described below.

WOODLAND

Woodland is the dominant habitat type in the project area. Three types of woodland occur in this area: live oak woodland, mixed evergreen forest, and foothill woodland. Live oak woodland is characterized by a dense canopy of interior live oak (*Quercus wislizenii*) and/or canyon live oak (*Q. chrysolepis*). Common shrubs in the understory include toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*) and poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*). Mixed evergreen forest occurs in areas with moist soils and can have greater tree species diversity. Dominant trees include live oaks, madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*), douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and California bay-laurel (*Umbellularia californica*). Foothill woodland is characterized by a two-tiered canopy of foothill pine (*Pinus sabiniana*) and oak.

Small patches of nonnative grassland occur in sunny openings within the woodland. Common grass species in this plant community include soft chess (*Bromus hordeaceus*), ripgut brome (*B. diandrus*), and hedgehog dogtail (*Cynosurus echinatus*). Common herbs include soapplant (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), and filaree (*Erodium* spp.). The access roads to both the staging termini represent disturbed areas within the woodland plant community. The proposed Foresthill Bridge Staging Terminus is characterized by disturbed grassland that was filled at the time that the Foresthill Bridge was constructed. Plant species encountered during biological field surveys include hedgehog dogtail, soft chess, hairy vetch (*Vicia villosa*), hedge parsley (*Torilis arvensis*), smooth cat's ear (*Hypochaeris glabra*), dovefoot geranium (*Geranium molle*), star thistle (*Centaurium solstitialis*), and blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*). There are no sensitive resources or habitats in the proposed Foresthill Bridge Staging Terminus.

CHAPARRAL

Chaparral is a dense, shrub-dominated plant community that occurs on drier slopes in the Sierra Nevada foothills. In the project area, chaparral occurs along the eastern portions of the proposed trail alignment and is dominated by chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*). Other shrub species present include manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* spp.), ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp.), poison oak, and redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*).

DRAINAGES

The majority of the drainages in the project area are ephemeral drainages that flow for brief periods of time in response to a single rain event. All of the drainages are characterized by a distinct bed and bank and eventually flow into the North Fork American River. Several of the drainages are intermittent drainages that flow for extended periods throughout the rainy season and dry up during the late spring or early summer (Placer County 2004). All drainages in the project area are subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) (see "Section 404 of the Clean Water Act"

under Section 5.2.1, "Federal Plans, Policies, Regulations, and Laws," below). Detailed information on the drainages is provided in the Preliminary Wetland Delineation, North Fork American River Trail Project (Placer County 2004).

WETLAND SEEP

A small (0.18-acre) wetland seep is located along the base of a slope near the North Fork/Middle Fork American River confluence. Dominant plant species in the seep include alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*) and Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*). Other species that occur in this community as subdominants include slender rush (*Juncus patens*), sedge (*Carex* sp.), and red willow (*Salix laevigata*). This seep qualifies as a wetland subject to USACE jurisdiction under Section 404 of the CWA (Placer County 2004).

5.1.2 WILDLIFE

Wildlife diversity is generally high in the mixed oak, foothill, and mixed evergreen woodlands. Amphibians and reptiles found in these woodlands include Pacific treefrog (*Hyla regilla*), western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), and California kingsnake (*Lampropeltis getulus*). Common resident birds in these forests include acorn woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), western scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma californica*), oak titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*), wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), and wrentit (*Chaemaea fasciata*). Migratory species that use these forest types during summer months to breed include ash-throated flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*), orange-crowned warbler (*Vermivora celata*), and black-headed grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*). Common mammals in these mixed woodlands include gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), mountain lion (*Puma concolor),* mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), and Douglas' squirrel (*Tamiasciurus douglasii*).

Chaparral generally has lower wildlife diversity than most forest and woodland habitats. However, chaparral does provide habitat for many wildlife species. Reptiles found in chaparral include western rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*), western fence lizard, and southern alligator lizard (*Gerrhonotus multicarinatus*). Birds commonly found in chaparral include California thrasher (*Toxostoma redivivum*), Bewick's wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), California towhee (*Pipilo crissalis*), and California quail (*Callipepla californica*). Mammals commonly associated with chaparral include gray fox and mule deer.

5.1.3 SENSITIVE BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Sensitive biological resources addressed in the following sections include those that are afforded special protection through the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and through the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), Bald Eagle Protection Act, CWA, California Endangered Species Act (CESA), and California Fish and Game Code. (See the discussions of federal and state plans, policies, regulations, and laws below in Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2, respectively.) Special-status species include plants and animals that are legally protected or that are otherwise considered sensitive by federal, state, or local resource conservation agencies and organizations. These include species that are state and/or federally listed as rare, threatened, or endangered; those considered as candidates or proposed for listing; species identified by the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and/or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as species of concern; and plants considered by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) to be rare, threatened, or endangered.

The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) (2006) was reviewed for sensitive biological resources, including sensitive habitats and special-status species that are known to occur in the vicinity of the project area. The occurrences within the Greenwood, Auburn, and Colfax U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute quadrangles were reviewed. The CNDDB includes site-specific information on all reported occurrences of sensitive biological resources in California and is a "positive sighting" database. It provides only a record of occurrences as reported to the CNDDB; therefore, a lack of data for species in specific areas does not necessarily indicate absence of the

species from that area. A database search of CNPS's *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants* (CNPS 2005) was conducted as well. In addition, a list of special-status species obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) (2004) was reviewed for potential special-status species that could occur in the project area.

5.1.4 JURISDICTIONAL WETLANDS AND OTHER WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES

A preliminary delineation of waters of the United States, including wetlands, was conducted by EDAW wetland ecologists in February 2004 (Placer County 2004). The delineation documented the presence of 48 drainages and one seep subject to USACE jurisdiction in the project area. All of these features qualify as sensitive habitats. The delineation was submitted to the Sacramento District of USACE in April 2004 and Nationwide Permit 42 was issued in November 2004. Because of realignment of the proposed trail, the number of drainages crossed by the proposed trail would be reduced to 47. The seep would not be affected by the proposed project. An amendment to Nationwide Permit 42 will be requested to include revisions to the trail alignment.

DEER MIGRATION CORRIDORS

Although mule deer is not considered a special-status species, DFG is concerned about preserving deer migration corridors in many foothill and mountainous regions of California that are currently experiencing expansion of urbanized areas. To address this concern in Placer County, DFG has researched and mapped critical habitat and deer migration patterns. Critical habitat, as defined by DFG, has been deemed essential to the long-term productivity of the herd. The project area does not include any areas mapped as critical or noncritical habitat for deer (Placer County Game Commission 1992). Noncritical deer habitat is mapped to the east of Weimar (approximately 2.5 miles from the east end of the proposed trail alignment) and critical habitat is mapped north of Foresthill (approximately 10 miles from the east end of the proposed trail alignment).

SPECIAL-STATUS PLANTS

A target list of special-status plant species was developed in 2004, using data from the CNPS Inventory and CNDDB, before focused botanical surveys were conducted. This list included Red Hills soaproot (*Chlorogalum grandiflorum*), Brandegee's clarkia (*Clarkia biloba* ssp. *brandageeae*), and Butte County fritillary (*Fritillaria eastwoodiae*). An updated search of the CNDDB and CNPS Inventory in 2006 reported two additional special-status species that have potential to occur in the project area: Jepson's onion (*Allium jepsonii*) and oval-leaved viburnum (*Viburnum ellipticum*).

Special-status plant surveys were conducted in the project area in May and June 2004 by EDAW botanists (Appendix C). Because there have been minor adjustments to the proposed trail alignment since 2004, additional surveys were conducted in 2006 and 2007. One special-status plant species, Brandegee's clarkia, was found in the project area during these surveys. Although Jepson's onion and oval-leaved viburnum were not identified as target species, the survey was conducted during the appropriate time of the year (i.e., blooming period) to identify both species. If present in the project area, these species would have been identified during the surveys because a complete floristic inventory was conducted. Each special-status plant species is briefly discussed below.

Brandegee's clarkia is a CNPS List 1B species (rare or endangered in California and elsewhere) and a USFWS species of concern. This annual herb is a member of the primrose family (Onagraceae) and blooms from May to July. Brandagee's clarkia occurs in chaparral and woodland habitats at elevations of approximately 1,200-35,000 feet. It often grows along roadcuts. Brandegee's clarkia is known from five locations within the vicinity of the project area (CNDDB 2006). Two individuals were observed growing in a fairly open wooded area just north of the proposed trail alignment (see Appendix C). The plant community in which the individuals were found was characterized by an open overstory of interior live oak and California bay laurel and a fairly open understory of toyon, creeping snowberry (*Symphoricarpos mollis*), and herbaceous grasses and forbs.

Red Hills soaproot is a CNPS List 1B species and USFWS species of concern. This perennial herb in the lily family (Liliaceae) blooms from May to June. Red Hills soaproot usually grows on gabbro and serpentine soils in cismontane woodland and chaparral, but it has been found on other soils as well. Red Hills soaproot was not observed during the focused botanical surveys, although many common soaproot plants (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*) were observed. Therefore, it is unlikely to occur within the project area.

Butte County fritillary is a CNPS List 3 species (plants about which more information is needed—a review list) and a USFWS species of concern. This perennial herb in the lily family occurs in chaparral and woodland and in openings in lower montane coniferous forests at elevations of approximately 1,900-59,000 feet. It also occasionally occurs on serpentine substrate. Butte County fritillary blooms from March to May. The CNDDB (2006) reports two occurrences of this species in the American River canyon near the Middle and North Forks of the American River. Although woodland and chaparral in the project area provide suitable habitat for this species, Butte County fritillary was not observed during focused botanical surveys. Therefore, it is unlikely to occur within the project area.

Jepson's onion is a CNPS List 1B species and a USFWS species of concern. This bulbiferous herb is in the lily family and is associated with chaparral, cismontane woodland, and lower montane coniferous forests. It is often found on serpentine or volcanic soils at elevations of approximately 1,180-5,200 feet. Jepson's onion blooms from May to August. This species was not observed during botanical surveys and is therefore considered unlikely to occur within the project area.

Oval-leaved viburnum is a CNPS List 2 species (rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere). This deciduous shrub is in the Caprifoliaceae family and blooms from May to June. It is associated with chaparral, cismontane woodland, and lower montane coniferous forests at elevations of 215–1,400 meters. Oval-leaved viburnum was not observed during botanical surveys and is therefore considered unlikely to occur within the project area.

SPECIAL-STATUS WILDLIFE

Several special-status wildlife species have potential to occur in the project vicinity, based on records in the CNDDB and regional presence of potentially suitable habitat:

- valley elderberry longhorn beetle (*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*),
- foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylii*),
- California horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum*),
- northwestern pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*),
- osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*),
- sharp-shinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*),
- Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*),
- California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*), and
- pacific fisher (*Martes pennanti pacifica*).

Each of these species is discussed briefly below.

The valley elderberry longhorn beetle is federally listed as threatened. This beetle requires elderberry shrubs for reproduction and survival and is typically associated with riparian forests and adjacent upland habitats. The beetle's range extends throughout the Central Valley and associated foothills to an elevation of about 3,000 feet. No elderberry shrubs were found within the project area; therefore, valley elderberry longhorn beetle is not expected to occur along the proposed trail alignment.

The foothill yellow-legged frog is a federal and state species of special concern. Foothill yellow-legged frogs are characteristically found close to water in association with perennial streams and ephemeral creeks that retain

perennial pools through the end of summer. In rivers, breeding areas are often associated with confluences of tributary streams that are predominantly perennial (Seltenrich and Pool 2002). These frogs require shallow, flowing streams with some cobble-sized substrate on which they deposit large masses of eggs. Egg laying normally follows the period of high-flow discharge associated with winter rainfall, usually between late March and early June. Eggs hatch in about 15–30 days depending on water temperature, and tadpoles metamorphose into juvenile frogs in 3–4 months. Several of the drainages that cross the project area may provide suitable breeding pools for foothill yellow-legged frogs.

California horned lizard and northwestern pond turtle are federal and state species of special concern. California horned lizards use a variety of upland habitats that have low bushes for cover, openings for sunning, and loose soil for burrows. Pond turtles require still or slow-moving water with instream emergent woody debris, rocks, or other similar features for basking sites. Pond turtle nests are typically located on unshaded upland slopes in dry substrates with clay or silt soils. Neither species is expected to occur in the project area because suitable habitat is not present.

Several raptor species that are considered state species of special concern could potentially nest in woodland trees in the project area, including osprey, sharp-shinned hawk, and Cooper's hawk. Other raptors that may nest in the project area include red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) and great-horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*). Sitings of bald and golden eagles have been reported in the project vicinity. Eagles may use the upland areas for foraging and roosting during migration and winter. Bald eagles may also forage for fish in Lake Clementine; however, bald or golden eagles are not known to nest in the project vicinity. California spotted owl, a California species of special concern, typically nests in dense stands of mixed conifers that have large-diameter trees and high canopy cover, but may also use midsuccessional forests and riparian areas. In the Sierra Nevada, spotted owls may nest in conifer forests at elevations of approximately 4,500–7,500 feet and riparian/hardwood forests at elevations of about 1,000–3,500 feet (Guiterrez et al. 1992). Researchers at DFG have no records for California spotted owls in the quadrangles that encompass the project area. Although there are records of spotted owls in quadrangles to the east at higher elevations where the forest is moister and cooler, spotted owls are not expected to nest in the project area because the woodland is likely too hot and dry (Gould, pers. comm., 2004).

The Pacific fisher is a federal candidate for listing and state species of special concern. Candidate species do not receive statutory protection under ESA; however, USFWS encourages the formation of partnerships to conserve candidate species because they may warrant future protection. In California, the fisher historically ranged throughout forested lands in the Sierra Nevada. The CNDDB reports an occurrence in 1973 in the American River canyon near Iowa Hill (CNDDB 2006), approximately 10 miles northeast of the east end of the proposed trail alignment. Fishers currently are believed to be extirpated throughout most of their historical range, especially in the northern and central portions of the Sierra Nevada (Zielinski et al. 1995, 69 Federal Register [FR] 18770–18792, April 8, 2004). Based on extensive and systematic surveys, currently there are only two known populations in California: one in the northwestern portion of the state and the other in the southern Sierra Nevada (69 FR 18770–18792, April 8, 2004). Because of the lack of extant fisher populations in the region, pacific fishers are not likely to occur in the project area.

5.2 REGULATORY SETTING

5.2.1 FEDERAL PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS

FEDERAL ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

USFWS has authority over projects that may affect the continued existence of a federally listed (threatened or endangered) terrestrial species. Section 9 of ESA prohibits the take of federally listed species; take is defined under ESA, in part, as killing, harming, or harassment. Under federal regulations, take is further defined to include habitat modification or degradation where it actually results in death or injury to wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, or sheltering.

Section 7 of ESA outlines procedures for federal interagency cooperation to conserve federally listed species and designated critical habitat. Section 7(a)(2) requires federal agencies to consult with USFWS to ensure that they are not undertaking, funding, permitting, or authorizing actions likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species.

MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT

The MBTA, first enacted in 1918, domestically implements a series of treaties between the United States and Great Britain (on behalf of Canada), Mexico, Japan, and the former Soviet Union that provide for international protection of migratory birds. It authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to regulate the taking of migratory birds. The MBTA provides that it shall be unlawful, except as permitted by regulations, "to pursue, take, or kill … any migratory bird, or any part, nest or egg of any such bird, included in the terms of conventions" with certain other countries (Title 16, Section 703 of the U.S. Code [i.e., 16 USC 703]). This includes direct and indirect acts, although harassment and habitat modification are not included unless they result in direct loss of birds, nests, or eggs. The current list of species protected by the MBTA includes several hundred species and essentially includes all native birds.

BALD EAGLE PROTECTION ACT

The Bald Eagle Protection Act provides for the protection of the bald eagle and the golden eagle by prohibiting, except under certain specified conditions, the taking, possession, and commerce of such birds. The 1972 amendments increased penalties for violating provisions of the act or regulations issued pursuant thereto and strengthened other enforcement measures.

SECTION 404 OF THE CLEAN WATER ACT

Pursuant to Section 404 of the CWA, USACE regulates discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. Waters of the United States and their lateral limits are defined in Title 33, Part 328.3(a) of the Code of Federal Regulations (i.e., 33 CFR Part 328.3[a]) and include navigable waters of the United States, interstate waters, all other waters where the use or degradation or destruction of the waters could affect interstate or foreign commerce, tributaries to any of these waters, and wetlands that meet any of these criteria or that are adjacent to any of these waters or their tributaries. For purposes of describing habitat values and characteristics, waters of the United States are often categorized as "jurisdictional wetlands" (i.e., wetlands over which USACE exercises jurisdiction pursuant to Section 404) and "other waters of the United States." Fill is defined as any material that replaces any portion of a water of the United States with dry land or changes the bottom elevation of any portion of a water of the United States. Any activity resulting in the placement of dredged or fill material within waters of the United States usually requires a permit from USACE even if the area is dry at the time the activity takes place.

The CWA and guidelines outlined in a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and USACE dated November 15, 1989, set forth a goal of restoring and maintaining existing aquatic resources. This MOA directed USACE to strive to avoid adverse impacts and to offset unavoidable adverse impacts on existing aquatic resources, and for wetlands, to strive to achieve a goal of an overall no net loss of values and functions. The MOA also noted the value of other waters of the United States, such as streams, rivers, and lakes. Under the guidelines, all waters of the United States are afforded protection, including requirements for appropriate and practicable mitigation based on values and functions of the aquatic resource that will be affected.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 11990: PROTECTION OF WETLANDS

Executive Order 11990 established the protection of wetlands and riparian systems as the official policy of the federal government. It requires all federal agencies to consider wetland protection as an important part of their

policies; to take action to minimize the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands; and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 11312: INVASIVE SPECIES

Executive Order 11312 directs all federal agencies to prevent and control introductions of invasive nonnative species in a cost-effective and sound manner to minimize their economic, ecological, and human health impacts. Executive Order 11312 established a national Invasive Species Council, made up of federal agencies and departments, and a supporting Invasive Species Advisory Committee, composed of state, local, and private entities. The Invasive Species Council and Advisory Committee oversee and facilitate implementation of the executive order, including preparation of a National Invasive Species Management Plan.

5.2.2 STATE PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS

CALIFORNIA ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Pursuant to Section 2081 of CESA, a permit from DFG is required for projects that would result in the take of a state-listed rare, threatened, or endangered plant or animal species. Under CESA, "take" is defined as an activity that would directly or indirectly kill an individual of a species; however, the CESA definition of take does not include "harming" or "harassing," as the definition under the federal ESA does. As a result, the threshold for take is higher under CESA than under ESA (i.e., habitat modification is not necessarily considered take under CESA).

CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME CODE SECTIONS 3503 AND 3513—PROTECTION OF BIRDS

Section 3503 of the California Fish and Game Code states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird. Section 3503.5 specifically states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any raptors (i.e., eagles, hawks, owls, and falcons), including their nests or eggs. Section 3513 of the Fish and Game Code provides for adoption of MBTA's provisions. It states that it is unlawful to take or possess any migratory nongame bird as designated in the MBTA or any part of such a migratory nongame bird. These state codes offer no statutory or regulatory mechanism for obtaining an incidental take permit for the loss of nongame, migratory birds. Typical violations of Sections 3503.5 and 3513 include destruction of active nests resulting from removal of vegetation in which the nests are located. Violations could also include failure of active raptor nests resulting from disturbance of nesting pairs by nearby project construction.

FULLY PROTECTED SPECIES UNDER THE CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME CODE

Protection of fully protected species is described in four sections of the California Fish and Game Code that list 37 fully protected species (Sections 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515). These statutes prohibit take or possession of fully protected species. DFG is unable to authorize incidental take of fully protected species when activities are proposed in areas inhabited by those species. DFG has informed nonfederal agencies and private parties that they must avoid take of any fully protected species in carrying out projects.

SECTION 1602 OF THE CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME CODE—STREAMBED ALTERATION

Under Section 1602, it is unlawful for any person, governmental agency, or public utility to substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow or substantially change the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake, or to deposit or dispose of debris, waste, or other material containing crumbled, flaked, or ground pavement where it may pass into any river, stream, or lake, without first notifying DFG of such activity. A stream is defined as a body of water that flows at least periodically or intermittently through a bed or channel having banks that supports fish or other aquatic life. This definition includes watercourses having a surface or subsurface flow that supports or has supported riparian vegetation. A DFG Streambed Alteration Agreement must be obtained for any project that would result in an impact on a river, stream, or lake.

PORTER-COLOGNE ACT CERTIFICATION

Each of the nine regional water quality control boards (RWQCBs) must prepare and periodically update water quality control plans (basin plans) pursuant to the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Each basin plan sets forth water quality standards for surface water and groundwater, as well as actions to control nonpoint and point sources of pollution to achieve and maintain these standards. Basin plans offer an opportunity to achieve wetland protection based on water quality objectives. Another opportunity for wetland protection is the Section 401 certification process. Under Section 401 of the CWA, an applicant for a Section 404 permit (to discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the United States) must obtain a certificate from the appropriate state agency stating that the fill is consistent with the state's water quality standards and criteria. In California, the authority to grant water quality certification is delegated by the State Water Resources Control Board to the nine RWQCBs.

SENATE BILL 1334

Although oak trees and oak woodland habitats are not afforded special protection under federal law, the California legislature enacted Senate Bill (SB) 1334 in 2004, which added oak woodland conservation regulations to the Public Resources Code. This law requires a County to determine whether a project within its jurisdiction may result in a conversion of oak woodlands that will have a significant effect on the environment. If a County determines that there may be a significant effect to oak woodlands, the County must consider alternative approaches to mitigate the significant effect of the conversion of oak woodlands. Such mitigation alternatives include: conservation through the use of conservation easements; planting and maintaining and appropriate number of replacement of trees; contribution of funds to the Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund for the purpose of purchasing oak woodlands conservation easements; and/or other mitigation measures developed by the County.

5.2.3 LOCAL PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND ORDINANCES

PLACER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

The following are the relevant goals and policies identified by the *Placer County General Plan* (Placer County 1994) for biological resources.

- **Policy 6.A.7.** [Placer] County shall discourage grading activities during the rainy season, unless adequately mitigated, to avoid sedimentation of creeks and damage to riparian habitat.

- **GOAL 6.B:** Protect wetland communities and related riparian areas throughout Placer County as valuable resources.

- **Policy 6.B.1.** The County shall support the "no net loss" policy for wetland areas regulated by USACE, USFWS, and DFG. Coordination with these agencies at all levels of project review shall continue to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures and the concerns of these agencies are adequately addressed.

- **Policy 6.B.4.** The County shall strive to identify and conserve remaining upland habitat areas adjacent to wetlands and riparian areas that are critical to the survival and nesting of wetland and riparian species.

- **GOAL 6.C:** To protect, restore, and enhance habitats that support fish and wildlife species so as to maintain populations at viable levels.

- **Policy 6.C.1.** The County shall identify and protect significant ecological resource areas and other unique wildlife habitats critical to protecting and sustaining wildlife populations. Significant ecological resource areas include the following:

    a. wetland areas including vernal pools;

b. stream environment zones;

c. any habitat for rare, threatened, or endangered animals or plants;

d. critical deer winter ranges (winter and summer), migratory routes, and fawning habitat;

e. large areas of non-fragmented natural habitat, including blue oak woodlands, valley foothill riparian, vernal pool habitat;

f. identifiable wildlife movement zones, including but not limited to, non-fragmented stream environment zones, avian and mammalian migratory routes, and known concentration areas of waterfowl within the Pacific Flyway; and

g. important spawning areas for anadromous fish.

- **Policy 6.C.6.** The County shall support preservation of the habitats of rare, threatened, endangered, and/or other special-status species. Federal and state agencies, as well as other resource conservation organizations, shall be encouraged to acquire and manage endangered species' habitats.

- **Policy 6.C.7.** The County shall support the maintenance of suitable habitats for all indigenous species of wildlife, without preference to game or non-game species, through maintenance of habitat diversity.

- **GOAL 6.D:** To preserve and protect the valuable vegetation resources of Placer County.

- **Policy 6.D.3.** The County shall support the preservation of outstanding areas of natural vegetation, including, but not limited to, oak woodlands, riparian areas, and vernal pools.

- **Policy 6.D.4.** The County shall ensure that landmark trees and major groves of native trees are preserved and protected. In order to maintain these areas in perpetuity, protected areas shall also include younger vegetation with suitable space for growth and reproduction.

- **Policy 6.D.6.** The County shall ensure the conservation of sufficiently large, continuous expanses of native vegetation to provide suitable habitat for maintaining abundant and diverse wildlife.

- **Policy 6.D.7.** The County shall support the management of wetland and riparian plant communities for passive recreation, groundwater recharge, nutrient catchment, and wildlife habitats. Such communities shall be restored or expanded, where possible.

WEIMAR-APPLEGATE-CLIPPER GAP GENERAL PLAN

The *Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap General Plan* contains the following goals and policies relevant to biological resources in the project area.

- **GOAL A.1:** Ensure a balanced environment where physical development can occur with minimal adverse effect to the natural resources of the area.

- **Policy A.1.3.** Encourage development activities in areas of least environmental sensitivity.

- **Policy A.1.4.** Encourage the use of ecologically innovative techniques in any future developments.

- **GOAL A.2:** Preserve outstanding areas of natural vegetation or fish and wildlife habitat.

- **Policy A.2.1.** Preserve the natural condition of all stream influence areas, including floodplains and riparian vegetation areas.

- **Policy A.2.3.** Provide for the protection of all rare or endangered species.

FORESTHILL DIVIDE COMMUNITY PLAN

The *Foresthill Divide Community Plan* (Community Plan), which is currently in draft form, includes the project area. The Community Plan contains the following goals and policies relevant to biological resources in the project area.

Vegetation

- **Policy 4.A.1-1.** Encourage landowners and developers to manage the integrity of existing terrain and native vegetation, especially in visually-sensitive areas such as hillsides, ridges, and along important transportation corridors, consistent with fire safety standards.

- **Policy 4.A.1-9.** Require that new development protect, restore, rehabilitate, and manage the native forest-woodlands to the maximum extent possible.

- **Policy 4.A.1-10.** Require that development on hillsides be limited to maintain valuable native forest vegetation and to control erosion.

- **Policy 4.A.1-14.** Support the preservation of native trees and the use of native seed sources and such seedlings and drought-tolerant plant materials in all revegetation/landscaping projects.

- **Policy 4.A.1-15.** Require that new development avoid, as much as possible, ecologically fragile areas (e.g., areas of rare or endangered species of plants, riparian areas). Where feasible, these areas and heritage trees should be protected through public acquisition of fee title or conservation easements to ensure protection.

Wetlands and Riparian

- **Policy 4.A.2-3.** Discourage direct runoff of pollutants and siltation into existing wetland areas from outfalls serving nearby development. Development shall be designed in such a manner that pollutants and siltation will not significantly adversely affect the value or function of wetlands.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat

- **Policy 4.A.3-2.** Require development in areas known to have particular value for wildlife to be carefully planned and, where possible, located so that the reasonable value of the habitat for wildlife is maintained.

- **Policy 4.A.3-6.** Support the maintenance of suitable habitats for all indigenous species of wildlife, without preference to game or non-game species, through maintenance of habitat diversity.

- **Policy 4.A.3-8.** Require new private or public developments to preserve and enhance existing native riparian habitat unless public safety concerns require removal of habitat for flood control or other public purposes. In cases where new private or public development results in modification or destruction of riparian habitat for purposes of flood control, the developers shall be responsible for acquiring, restoring, and enhancing at least an equivalent amount of like habitat within or near the project area.

- **Policy 4.A.6-1.** The County shall encourage the sustained productive use of forest land as a means of providing open space and conserving other natural resources.

PLACER COUNTY TREE ORDINANCE

The Placer County Tree Ordinance applies to any project with the potential to affect protected trees. Protected trees are defined as any native tree species with a dbh of 6 inches or greater. The Placer County Tree Ordinance acknowledges the County's value for native trees and their preservation. This ordinance prohibits the removal of landmark trees, including stands or groves of native trees, native tree corridors, and other significant native tree habitats. In addition, trees that are designated for preservation and avoidance are not to be damaged. Removal of trees from riparian areas is also prohibited by the ordinance without prior evaluation and consideration of suitable mitigation measures.

5.3 IMPACTS

5.3.1 ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

The biological resources investigation involved the following:

- literature review;
- a reconnaissance-level field survey;
- focused botanical surveys;
- evaluation of potentially occurring special-status species and other sensitive biological resources; and
- a preliminary delineation of jurisdictional waters of the United States, including wetlands.

5.3.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on the Placer County CEQA Checklist and the State CEQA Guidelines, the proposed project would result in a potentially significant impact on biological resources if it would:

- substantially affect a rare or endangered species;
- interfere substantially with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species;
- substantially diminish habitat for fish, wildlife, or plants;
- substantially affect a threatened species;
- result in any significant activity in riparian areas or wetlands;
- conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources;
- conflict with an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan;
- remove more than 50% of the existing vegetation; or
- result in any significant construction in a deer migration route.

The construction and long-term use of the proposed trail would not substantially interfere with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, nor would it affect important deer migration routes. Vegetation removal would only occur within the trail corridor, and all vegetation would be allowed to grow back except within the trail tread. Because the proposed project would have no impact on these thresholds, they are not discussed further in this chapter.

5.3.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

IMPACT 5-1	Biological Resources – Potential Disturbance of Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog Habitat or Individuals. *Although no foothill yellow-legged frogs were observed in the project area during the field surveys, potential habitat for the frogs does exist. Construction of the trail across drainages could degrade aquatic habitat or could result in physical injury to yellow-legged frog.*
Significance	*Potentially Significant*
Mitigation Proposed	*Mitigation Measure 5-1: Protect Foothill Yellow-legged Frog*
Residual Significance	*Less Than Significant*

The foothill yellow-legged frog, which is a federal and state species of special concern, may occur within the project area. Most of the drainages that the proposed trail would cross are too steep and flows are too intermittent to hold water sufficiently to support breeding populations of foothill yellow-legged frogs; however, a few of the drainages have terraces and small pools that may have appropriate substrate and water velocity for egg deposition and development, and they may hold water long enough through the summer to support larval metamorphosis. Construction of the proposed trail across these drainages during the breeding season may affect foothill yellow-legged frogs by causing the temporary release of sediments in the water or by physically disturbing egg masses, tadpoles, or larvae during work in the drainage. Removing rocks from the streambed to build the trail retaining walls or stream crossings may also physically disturb egg masses, tadpoles, and adults if they are present. Trail use is not expected to have a significant effect on foothill yellow-legged frogs because stream crossings would be provided for trail users to avoid impacts on waterways. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 5-1 would reduce the potentially significant impact of trail construction on the potential habitat of foothill yellow-legged frog or individual frogs to a less-than-significant level.

IMPACT 5-2	Biological Resources – Potential Disturbance of Nests and Individual Raptors and Other Nesting Birds. *Trees and other vegetation in and adjacent to the project area provide potential nest sites for raptors and migratory birds. Removal of trees or other vegetation during trail construction could destroy or disturb nests, resulting in loss of eggs or young.*
Significance	*Potentially Significant*
Mitigation Proposed	*Mitigation Measure 5-2: Protect Raptors and Other Nesting Birds*
Residual Significance	*Less Than Significant*

Although removal of trees greater than 6 inches in dbh would be avoided to the extent possible, the potential to remove some trees cannot be entirely dismissed. Removal of trees greater than 6 inches dbh could result in loss of nests of raptors and migratory birds, which is considered a potentially significant impact. Indirect disturbance during construction and removal of other vegetation, such as shrubs, could also result in the loss of migratory bird nests, which is also considered a potentially significant impact. There could be some disturbance to raptors or other nesting birds when trail users pass nesting sites; however, this disturbance would be temporary and would have minor effects on the nesting species. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 5-2 would reduce the potentially significant impact of trail construction on nesting raptors and other birds to a less-than-significant level.

IMPACT 5-3	Biological Resources – Potential Loss of Special-Status Plants. *One special-status plant species, Brandegee's clarkia, was documented along the proposed trail alignment. Construction of the proposed trail could potentially disturb a population of Brandegee's clarkia.*
Significance	*Potentially Significant*
Mitigation Proposed	*Mitigation Measure 5-3: Protect Special-Status Plants*
Residual Significance	*Less Than Significant*

Two individuals of Brandegee's clarkia were observed in one location along the proposed trail alignment during focused botanical surveys. Both hand and mechanized construction of the trail could potentially result in destruction of these plants, as well as their root system and seed bank. Depending on the extent of disturbance in the project area, this impact could be considered potentially significant. The proposed trail would be maintained to minimize vegetation growth within the trail path; therefore, the establishment of any special-status plant species within the path of the trail is highly unlikely, rendering this impact less than significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 5-3 would reduce the potentially significant impact of trail construction on special-status plant species to a less-than-significant level.

IMPACT 5-4	Biological Resources – Impacts on Waters of the United States. *Installation of stream crossings and bridges and trail construction could result in fill of jurisdictional waters of the United States, including wetlands.*
Significance	*Potentially Significant*
Mitigation Proposed	*Mitigation Measure 5-4: Protect Jurisdictional Waters of the United States*
Residual Significance	*Less Than Significant*

Construction of the trail would entail the installation of stream crossings and bridges across approximately 47 drainages that cross the proposed trail alignment. Placement of trail material or bridge footings in the drainages or seep would be considered a fill of jurisdictional waters of the United States that are subject to USACE jurisdiction under Section 404 of the CWA. The fill of jurisdictional waters of the United States is considered a potentially significant impact. Stream crossings would be provided for trail users and the use of the proposed trail would not include any fill of waters in the project area; therefore, the impact of trail use is considered less than significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 5-4 would reduce the potentially significant impact of fill of waters of the United States during trail construction to a less-than-significant level.

IMPACT 5-5	Biological Resources – Streambed Alteration. *Construction of the proposed trail would require crossing approximately 47 drainages. These crossings could alter the streambeds and adjacent vegetation of these drainages that are regulated by DFG.*
Significance	*Potentially Significant*
Mitigation Proposed	*Mitigation Measure 5-5: Implement Conditions of Streambed Alteration Agreement*

Residual Significance	*Less Than Significant*

Trail use would not involve the alteration of the bank or bed of any waterways in the project area. However, the proposed trail alignment would cross approximately 47 drainages, which could result in alteration or disturbance of streambeds or removal of riparian vegetation. Because streambeds are considered sensitive by DFG, impacts on them are considered potentially significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 5-5 would reduce the potentially significant impact of trail construction on streambeds to a less-than-significant level.

IMPACT 5-6	Biological Resources – Potential Introduction and Spread of Invasive Weeds. *Several invasive weeds, including Himalayan blackberry, Italian thistle, and yellow starthistle, currently occur in the project area. Construction and use of the proposed trail has the potential to introduce additional invasive weed species or spread invasive weeds already in the project area. Introduction and spread of invasive weeds could reduce habitat quality.*
Significance	*Potentially Significant*
Mitigation Proposed	*Mitigation Measure 5-6: Prevent the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Weeds*
Residual Significance	*Less Than Significant*

Himalayan blackberry, Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*), and yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) currently occur in the project area. Construction of the trail in the relatively undisturbed project area and subsequent use of the trail by hikers and horses has the potential to introduce invasive weeds to the area or result in the spread of invasive weeds already present. The spread of invasive weeds could potentially diminish habitat quality for native plant and wildlife species in the project area by excluding native vegetation, altering habitat structure, and reducing food resources for wildlife. It could also alter the hydrology of the seep and drainages, which are considered sensitive ecosystems. Depending on the types of weeds introduced and the extent of the populations, these effects could be considered potentially significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 5-6 would reduce the potentially significant impact of invasive weeds to a less-than-significant level.

IMPACT 5-7	Biological Resources – Conflict with Local Policies or Ordinances. *The proposed project would not cause a conflict with any local policies or ordinances in the project area. There are no habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans; therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with any such plans.*
Significance	*Less Than Significant*
Mitigation Proposed	*None Warranted*
Residual Significance	*Less Than Significant*

See Impact 4-1, "Potential for Conflicts with Land Use Plans, Policies, or Regulations," in Chapter 4.0, "Land Use," for further discussion.

IMPACT 5-8	Biological Resources – Impacts on Oak Woodland Habitat. *The proposed project may result in the removal of some trees that are 6 inches dbh or larger from oak woodland habitat. Native oak trees are protected under the Placer County Tree Ordinance. Also, SB 1334, Statutes of 2004, requires County's to determine significance of conversion of oak woodland, and provide mitigation measures for significant effects.*
Significance	*Potentially Significant*
Mitigation Proposed	*Mitigation Measure 5-7: Replacement of Native Oaks*
Residual Significance	*Less Than Significant*

Although removal of trees greater than 6 inches in dbh would be avoided to the extent possible by refinement of the precise trail alignment during construction, the potential to remove some trees as a result of construction of the proposed project cannot be entirely dismissed. Native trees that are 6 inches dbh or larger are protected under the Placer County Tree Ordinance. SB 1334, Statutes of 2004, emphasizes the importance of evaluating the significance of oak woodland conversion. Because the loss of oak woodland habitat is an important issue in Placer County and California, removal of native oak trees would be potentially significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 5-7 would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

5.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation Measure 5-1: Protect Foothill Yellow-legged Frog.

Mitigation Measure 5-1 applies to Impact 5-1.

The County and its primary construction contractor shall implement the following measures to reduce impacts on foothill yellow-legged frogs:

- Construction of the trail across drainages and streams shall occur when the drainages are dry, to the extent feasible.
- Guidelines shall be implemented to protect water quality and prevent erosion, as outlined in the best management practices (BMPs) in Chapter 3.0, "Project Description," and Mitigation Measure 11-2, "Obtain Authorization for Construction Activities with the Central Valley RWQCB and Implement Erosion and Sediment Control Measures as Required."
- If water is present during construction, disturbance to pools and slow runs with cobble-sized substrate shall be minimized. In particular, rocks shall not be collected from in-water environments from late March to early September to avoid disturbing foothill yellow-legged frog egg masses and tadpoles.

Mitigation Measure 5-2: Protect Raptors and Other Nesting Birds.

Mitigation Measure 5-2 applies to Impact 5-2.

The County and its primary construction contractor shall implement the following measures to reduce impacts on raptors and other nesting birds:

- Limit removal of trees greater than 6 inches dbh to the greatest degree possible. If trees larger than 6 inches dbh must be removed, then the following mitigation measures shall be implemented:

- Tree removal shall be done in accordance with the Placer County Tree Ordinance.

- Before removal of trees during the non-breeding season, a qualified biologist shall inspect the tree for potential raptor nest, which are protected under Section 3503.5 of the California Fish and Game Code. If raptor nests are present and cannot be avoided, consult with DFG regarding appropriate measures for tree removal. If no nests are found, no further mitigation is required.

- If any construction activities, including tree removal, take place between March 1 and August 31, preconstruction surveys for active raptor nests shall be conducted prior to the beginning of construction. If any active raptor nests are identified during preconstruction surveys, then impacts to active raptor nests shall be avoided by the establishment of appropriate buffers and/or nest monitoring by a qualified wildlife biologist.

- Avoid construction within the buffer until the end of the breeding season and consult with DFG regarding alternative appropriate protection measures. The nest tree shall not be removed.

- Woody vegetation (e.g. small trees and shrubs) shall not be removed during the nesting season for raptors and migratory birds (i.e., March to August) to the extent feasible. If woody vegetation must be removed during the nesting season, the amount and extent to be removed shall be minimized to the extent feasible.

Mitigation Measure 5-3: Protect Special-Status Plants.

Mitigation Measure 5-3 applies to Impact 5-3.

Note: Special-status plant surveys in support of the proposed project have been conducted along the entire alignment of the original and revised trail corridors; however, surveys of the new segment of the proposed trail alignment were completed during the non-blooming season. The only special-status plant species documented during these surveys is Brandegee's clarkia. Brandagee's clarkia is a CNPS list 2 species; it is not listed under the state or federal endangered species acts. Nevertheless, impacts to Brandagee's clarkia resulting from the proposed project would be considered significant under CEQA. Brandangee's clarkia is an annual species that is fairly common in the vicinity of the project site and appears to thrive on sites that have experienced some level of prior disturbance such as roadsides of along trails.

The following mitigation measures shall be implemented to avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse effects on Brandagee's clarkia resulting from project implementation:

- The 2.3-mile new segment of the proposed trail alignment shall be surveyed during the blooming season for Brandegee's clarkia prior to the start of construction.

- The locations of all known Brandegee's clarkia occurrences in the vicinity of the proposed trail alignment shall be clearly marked by a qualified biologist for avoidance by construction crews prior to the commencement of trail construction activities.

- Construction crews shall be alerted to the presence of Brandagee's clarkia in the vicinity of the proposed trail corridor, shall be shown maps of known locations and the methods used to identify populations in the field, and shall be asked to avoid these occurrences and a 25 foot buffer zone around them to the greatest extent possible.

- If complete avoidance of the populations is not feasible, the areas where occurrences would be impacted shall be minimized to the greatest extent feasible.

- In those areas where Brandagee's clarkia cannot be avoided, trail construction shall take place after the plants have completed their flowering cycles and set seed.

- A qualified biologist shall be present during trail construction in or near occurrences of Brandagee's clarkia and shall collect seeds from any occurrences of Brandagee's clarkia at those sites that will be impacted. Seeds collected shall be distributed immediately following collection in the immediate vicinity of the original site, but outside the construction footprint

Mitigation Measure 5-4: Protect Jurisdictional Waters of the United States.

Mitigation Measure 5-4 applies to Impact 5-4.

Note: The wetland delineation completed in support of the proposed project in 2004 was submitted to and verified by the USACE. In addition, a nationwide permit for the proposed project has been obtained from USACE, and a water quality certification pursuant to Section 401 has been obtained from the Central Valley RWQCB. Both the wetland delineation and 401 permit will be resubmitted to the appropriate agencies to incorporate changes to the proposed trail alignment.

The County and its primary construction contractor shall implement the following measures to reduce potential impacts on jurisdictional waters of the United States, including wetlands:

- Comply with the terms and conditions set forth in Nationwide Permit 42 obtained from USACE for the proposed project.

- Comply with the terms and conditions set forth in the Section 401 water quality certification. For a complete list of these terms see Chapter 3.0, "Project Description".

Mitigation Measure 5-5: Implement Conditions of Streambed Alteration Agreement.

Mitigation Measure 5-5 applies to Impact 5-5.

Note: A Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement for the proposed project was obtained from DFG in August 2004.

The County shall comply with the terms and conditions set forth in the Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement. Because of alignment changes and new drainages affected since the issuance of the 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement, the permit application will be resubmitted following the filing of the Notice of Determination for the proposed project, and any new conditions attached to the reissuance of the Streambed Alteration Agreement will be implemented.

Mitigation Measure 5-6: Prevent the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Weeds.

Mitigation Measure 5-6 applies to Impact 5-6.

The County shall implement the following measures to reduce potential impacts resulting from the introduction and spread of invasive weeds:

- A target list of invasive weeds with the potential to occur and be problematic in the project area shall be developed. This may be accomplished by reviewing the California Invasive Plant Council's "CalEPPC List,"

or list of invasive wildland weeds (2006); the California Department of Food and Agriculture's "Encycloweedia," or list of invasive weeds (2004); and by consulting knowledgeable individuals such as the resource ecologists employed by Reclamation and the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the County agricultural commissioner.

- The County shall ensure that any equipment used during construction is free of mud or seed-bearing material before such equipment enters the construction area.
- If populations of invasive weeds are documented in the construction area, they shall be eradicated prior to construction, preferably before they set seed. If eradication is infeasible, the population shall be clearly identified in the field by flagging and shall be avoided during construction to prevent spread.
- The County shall ensure that any fill soil, mulch, seeds, and straw materials used during construction and implementation of BMPs are weed-free. Certified weed-free material shall be used if available.
- Once the trail is constructed and open to the public, conduct periodic monitoring (at least once per year during the growing season) to ensure early detection and eradication of any invasive weed species brought in by users. Any populations detected during annual monitoring shall be treated and eradicated as soon as possible after detection, preferably before seeds set.

Mitigation Measure 5-7: Replacement of Native Oaks.

Mitigation Measure 5-7 applies to Impact 5-8.

If removal of native trees larger than 6 inches dbh is required during construction of the proposed project, the County shall take measures to compensate for the removal of those trees consistent with the Placer County Tree Ordinance.

6.0 CULTURAL RESOURCES

This chapter discusses the existing cultural resources setting for the proposed project. It analyzes the potential impacts on cultural resources that could result from the implementation of the proposed project and describes mitigation measures needed to reduce those impacts.

6.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The American River and the surrounding region are known to contain numerous remains associated with early Native American occupation and historic-era activities. To place these resources within a broader cultural context and so that their significance can be better understood, a brief outline of the archaeological, ethnographic, and historical context of the region is presented below.

6.1.1 PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The Framework for Archaeological Research Management (Jackson et al. 1994) proposes a tentative culture chronology and culture history for the north-central Sierra Nevada. The proposed cultural chronology for the American River drainage has been refined further through investigations conducted within the South Fork American River by Tremaine and Jackson (1994) and Boyd (1998), and synthesized by Jackson and Ballard (1999). The following outline of prehistoric habitation chronology relevant to the project area is based largely on these studies.

EARLY HOLOCENE PATTERN AND PERIOD (CA. 10,000–7,000 B.P.)

Jackson and Ballard (1999) use the all-encompassing Western Pluvial Lakes Tradition to describe this broad time frame. As they point out, this tradition was first defined by Bedwell (1970) as a human adaptation to lake, marsh, and grassland environments that were prevalent at this time. Appearing after 11,000 years Before Present (B.P.), the tradition slowly disappeared ca. 8,000–7,000 B.P. There may have been a shift in land use patterns away from the wetland environments established during the Western Pluvial Lakes Tradition (Jackson and Ballard 1999). Regardless of the land-use strategy, at the very least, it appears from limited data that the presence of peoples within the American River region at this time was minimal.

ARCHAIC PATTERN AND PERIOD (CA. 7,000–3,200 B.P.)

Characterized by generally warm and dry climatic conditions, interrupted by brief cool, wet conditions, this period of general economic and technological patterns appears to correspond with the appearance of handstones and milling slabs, suggesting an intensification of resource procurement that included seeds and other botanical constituents. Jackson and Ballard (1999) suggest that the early part of this period (7,000–4,500 B.P.) was marked by the presence of concave base and large side-notched bifaces and the use of stemmed and large corner-notched point types during the later half of the period (4,500–3,200 B.P.).

SIERRAN PATTERN (CA. 3,200–600 B.P.)

This broad time period, comprising the Early and Middle Sierran periods (discussed further below), evidences an expansion in the use of obsidian, which is interpreted with reservation to indicate an increase in regional land use, and the regular use of certain locales. This pattern begins with a return to cool/moist climatic conditions, where forays into the Sierra Nevada may have been by groups with resident populations in the western Sierran foothills, Central Valley, and/or Great Basin. No evidence of permanent, year-round habitation has been found above 3,500 feet within the American River watershed, and it has been suggested that peoples may have timed their forays to the availability of the local resources. Jackson and Ballard (1999) suggest that increased use and adaptation is reflected in the reliance upon acorns and the heavy exploitation of large game. Using a model of site

patterning first proposed by Jackson (1983) and collaborated by geographic information system (GIS) modeling (Hunt 1999), the increased exploitation of resources during the later portion (ca. post–1,400 B.P.) of this time period is seen as marked by the adoption of mortar technology. Based on their distribution, use of mortars appears to have been most intense below the snow line, with usage remaining high within the black oak and sugar pine woodlands above the snow line and decreasing within the alpine zone (Hunt 1999). Models of toolstone acquisition suggest that east/west trade routes existed during this period between the Sierran crest and the Central Valley of California (see Markley and Day 1991, Day et al. 1996, McGuire and Bloomer 1996).

Middle Sierran Period (ca. 1,400–600 B.P.)

This period begins at approximately 1,400 B.P., which corresponds with a dramatic decrease in obsidian use, not only throughout the subregion, but throughout the Sierra Nevada. There was a major technological improvement associated with the introduction of bow-and-arrow technology during this time. Widespread changes occur at similar time frames throughout Central California and within the western Great Basin. Social disruption is inferred from changes in artifact assemblages, land use patterns, and high incidence of violent death. This pattern is followed by relatively intensive land use, active trade, and the establishment of permanent settlements in some regions, inferred as reflecting increased populations (Jackson and Ballard 1999).

Late Sierran Period (ca. 600–150 B.P.)

Regionally, this period is characterized by continued intensive use of the western slope of the Sierra Nevada, including significant use of acorns, but with less of a focus on seeds; exploitation of fauna, including deer and rabbits; year-round occupation of sites below 3,000–3,500 feet; and short-term seasonal occupation of mid- to high-elevation Sierran sites. The presence of single-component sites dating to this time period is given as evidence for this intensified use (Jackson and Ballard 1999). Use of the small-stem Sierra Gunther Series points common in earlier periods disappears abruptly and is replaced by small desert side-notched types, with continued use of small corner-notched points. Large corner-notched, stemmed, and contracting stemmed points may have reemerged during the latter portion of this period.

6.1.2 ETHNOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

Ethnographically, the project area is situated within the traditional territory of the Nisenan (sometimes referred to as the Southern Maidu). Kroeber (1925) recognized three Nisenan dialects—Northern and Southern Hill, and Valley Nisenan. The Nisenan territory included the drainages of the Yuba, Bear, and American Rivers, and the lower drainages of the Feather River, extending from the crest of the Sierra Nevada to the banks of the Sacramento River. According to Bennyhoff (1961), the southern boundary with the Miwok was probably a few miles south of the American River, bordering a shared area used by both Miwok and Nisenan groups that extended to the Cosumnes River. It appears that while the foothill Nisenan had a distrust for the valley peoples, the relationship between the Nisenan and the Washoe to the east was primarily friendly. Elders recall intergroup marriage and trade that involved primarily the exchange of acorns for fish procured by the Washoe (Wilson 1972).

Within the Nisenan territory, several political divisions, constituting tribelets, each had their respective headmen in the larger villages. However, it is not known which of these larger population centers wielded more influence than others, although they were all located in the foothill areas. In general, more substantial and permanent Nisenan villages were not established on the valley plain between the Sacramento River and the foothills, although this area was used as a rich hunting and gathering ground. One tribelet was that composed of people occupying the territory between the Bear River and the Middle Fork of the American River. According to Kroeber (1925), the larger villages could have had populations exceeding 500 individuals, although small settlements consisting of 15–25 people and extended families were common. Several village sites are depicted by Wilson and Towne (1978) along the North Fork American River just east of Auburn. These are the villages of ‘Chulku, Didit, Hakaka, Wemea, Koyo, Sumyan, and Soloklok.

Like most valley and foothill groups, the Nisenan exploited a wide variety of floral and faunal food sources. The primary staple food was acorn, and gathering expeditions were organized seasonally, although hunting, fishing, and the gathering of other floral foodstuffs occurred throughout the year. The seasonal harvests were often communal property and important social behaviors were intricately related to these harvests. Various roots, nuts, wild onion, wild sweet potato, and many varieties of grasses, berries, and fruits were also gathered at various times. Many were processed and stored for winter use, although fresh fruits such as various berries, wild plums, grapes, and other native fruits were undoubtedly consumed fresh. Studies within the project area indicate that Native Americans deliberately burned the meadows to increase forage and improve the habitat, clear the areas around habitations, kill insects, improve wild seed crops, and facilitate travel and hunting (Deal and Bennett 1996, Deal and Alblinger 1998). These findings are consistent with work conducted by Anderson (1990, 1991, 1993) and Anderson and Nabhan (1991).

Faunal species were acquired through any number of techniques and implements including the bow and arrow, drives, and decoys. Nets, traps, rodent hooks, and fire were all put to use in hunting small game, and fish could be caught with nets, gorges, hooks, and harpoons. One technique apparently involved using soaproot and turkey mullein to poison the water so that fish could be gathered easily. Freshwater clams and mussels were also gathered in the larger watercourses, such as the American River. Other aquatic food sources available to Native populations within the project area would have included fish such as salmon and sturgeon that would have been netted or caught with the aid of weirs.

Reluctance on the part of traditional Nisenan and the virtual destruction of the culture in the 19th century make it difficult to discuss Nisenan spiritual beliefs and practices in any detail. However, historical records document a number of observances and dances, some of which are still performed today, that were important ceremonies in early historical times. In general, the basic religious system noted throughout central California, the Kuksu cult, appeared among the Nisenan. Cult membership was restricted to those initiated in its spirit- and deity-impersonating rites. The Kuksu cult, however, was only one of several levels of religious practice among the Nisenan. Various dances associated with mourning and the change of seasons were also important. One of the last major additions to Nisenan spiritual life occurred sometime shortly after 1872 with a revival of the Kuksu cult as an adaptation to the Ghost Dance religion (Wilson and Towne 1978).

6.1.3 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Aside from early Spanish explorers and probable trappers and traders from the Hudson Bay Company, the Sierra Nevada foothill region and the Sacramento Valley were virtually unsettled by Euroamericans before the Gold Rush. In 1844, the Stevens-Townsend Party entered California via Donner Pass, passing along the divide just north of the North Fork American River (Egan 1977). This same route was traversed by John Fremont a year later. However, this route was not the first to be used by immigrant groups: In 1841, the Bidwell-Bartelson Party crossed to the south into Tuolumne County, with other groups using the Pit River route to the north on a regular basis during the early 1840s.

A wave of gold seekers descended upon California and the foothill and mountain regions of the Sierra Nevada following the discovery of gold at Coloma on the South Fork American River in January 1848. The 1850 U.S. Census put the population of Placer County at 11,417, with 6,945 Whites, 3,019 Chinese, 89 Blacks, 634 foreign persons, and 730 Native Americans.

The remains of mining operations found along the North Fork American River reflect the progression of mining practices within the region, the nature of the gold-bearing deposits, and the progression of technology and the application of capital through time. Gold production, like other mining concerns, has gone through periods of boom and bust. Initially (during the late 1840s), technology and capital outlay was limited to a pan and a pick and shovel, and mining was limited primarily to bar deposits located along numerous drainages of the American River and its tributaries. Numerous small camps sprang up at this time along the South Fork American River, with names such as Louisiana Bar, New York Bar, Murders Bar, Texas Bar, Philadelphia Bar, Poverty Bar, and

Cherokee Bar. Historical references to camps along the North Fork American River above its junction with the South Fork could not be located within the project area. However, extremely rich placer mining operations were conducted to the east on the Upper North Fork American River at Green Valley.

To supply the mining towns and camps of the region, goods were brought up from Sacramento to Auburn. From there, one route went between the North Fork American River and Bear River to just below the present-day town of Colfax. The other went up the Forest Hill Divide to Grizzly Bear House, Butcher's Ranch, and Yankee Jim's, where the road split, with one route extending to Forest Hill and Michigan Bluff and the other to Todd Valley. On the Forest Hill Divide route, numerous bridges have spanned the American River since 1855, just below the confluence with the Middle Fork American River, immediately west of the proposed trail. The last historic bridge, a steel truss bridge that was replaced by a much taller structure in 1973, was erected in the late 1930s (Auburn Journal 1973).

In addition to the simple pick, pan, and shovel methods used in the earliest days of the Gold Rush, an increased amount of gravel could be processed using a rocker, a rectangular box mounted on rockers about 4 feet long that sorted gravels and collected gold in riffles located at the bottom. Use of this device also resulted in small cooperatives in which claims could be worked by small groups: one person dug gravels, another loaded gravels in the rocker, and a third poured water into the device to wash the gravel deposits. Although Euroamerican miners who favored more technologically advanced methods abandoned these devices by the mid-1850s, the devices continued to be used by the Chinese into the 1900s (Maniery 1992).

Two other devices used by early placer miners were the "Long Tom," which became common by about 1850, and its variant, the longer sluice box, which became common by 1851. Both required a constant flow of water from one end while dirt was shoveled in from the sides and gold was trapped in riffles at the bottom of the apparatus. Because a larger amount of dirt and gravels could be processed, larger groups operated these extraction devices (Kelly and McAleer 1986, Williams 1930 in Maniery 1992).

While both of these methods required large amounts of water, ground sluicing required even greater amounts. This technique consisted of washing gold-bearing gravels over exposed bedrock. Parallel rows of stacked stones at acute angles are commonly found at ground sluicing sites. Because of this patterning, some have suggested that they are associated with Chinese mining operations. However, several studies at mining sites with both Chinese and Anglo miners have found no correlation with ethnicity (see Ritchie 1981; LaLande 1981, 1983a, 1983b, 1985; Johnson and Theodoratus 1984; Steeves 1984; Kelly and McAleer 1986).

As the easily accessed and mined placer deposits along the rivers gave out, attention turned to the Eocene and Tertiary gravels situated on the ridges surrounding the American River canyon. These operations required the construction of extensive water conveyance systems. Within the vicinity of the Eocene and Tertiary gravel deposits, camps sprang up at such places as Mountain Springs (now Gold Run), Dutch Flat, Iowa Hill, and Lost Camp (Towle 2001a, 2001b). While several large systems (North Fork Dam and Ditch, Natoma Water and Mining Company) were used to tap the waters of the American River, none are located within the section of the North Fork American River in the vicinity of the proposed trail.

The next technological event to affect how gold was extracted from the American River was the advent of hydraulic mining. The development of this method is attributed to Anthony Chabot and Edward Matteson, who were the first to use hydraulicking at Buckeye Hill and American Hill near Nevada City (Kelley 1959). At first low-pressure canvas hoses and nozzles were used. However, these were rapidly replaced by iron pipe and improved nozzles, allowing water to be diverted under much greater pressure. While there is no mention of hydraulic mining within the project area, this method was employed farther east at Hayden Hill and Green Valley. These operations caused millions of tons of silt and sand to wash into streams and rivers, clogging drainages from the foothills to San Francisco Bay. As a response to numerous lawsuits an injunction was imposed against the industry in 1884, and the Caminetta Act authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to oversee industry operations. In 1935 a dam was erected on the North Fork American River in an effort to control the flow of

sediments into the valley. Clementine Reservoir (aka Lake Clementine), formed by this dam, is located directly north of the proposed trail.

The formation processes at mining sites consist of artifact concentrations and feature systems that reflect the myriad operations and technologies that have been used in the area. These cycles of occupation and abandonment create layers or components of mining technology and systems that are horizontally stratified, often altering or obliterating previous operations; they can often be viewed as discontinuous with underground structure (Hardesty 1988). Many times only fragments of technologies and operations are visible. For example, Lindstrom (1989) found that placer mining operations resulted in finer sediments being carried away during the washing process, with only larger cobbles or boulders remaining at the processing site. Although an investigation into the methods and traces of mining activities was not necessarily within the scope of the proposed trail project, sites bearing the hallmarks of all techniques of gold extraction can likely be found within the canyon of the North Fork American River.

6.1.4 SURVEY RESULTS

Cultural resources surveys were conducted within the project area in late January and early February 2004, February 2006, and March 2007 by an EDAW cultural resources specialist (see the field survey discussion in Section 6.3.1, "Analysis Methodology," below for a description of survey methods). Nine cultural resources were documented within and in the immediate vicinity of the project area during the 2004 survey; however, no additional cultural resources were documented during the 2006 or 2007 surveys. Mapping from 1960s and 1970s surveys indicates numerous sites and features within or adjacent to the proposed trail alignment. However, many were not encountered during the EDAW cultural resources survey, possibly because of mapping inaccuracies inherent in brief surveys such as those conducted in anticipation of the Auburn Dam project and the lack of geographic information system (GIS) technology at the time. Mapping for two of the newly documented resources described below (NF-6 and NF-7) is approximate, as suitable global positioning system (GPS) readings could not be obtained because of dense vegetation and rugged terrain. All of the recorded sites date to the historic era; many are related to placer mining and mining-related water conveyance. Information on these resources is summarized in Table 6-1. The resources are arranged in order from west (at the North Fork/Middle Fork American River confluence [confluence]) to east (at the Ponderosa Bridge).

Table 6-1
Cultural Resources Documented during the Cultural Resources Survey

Resource Number	Resource Type	Location (USGS Quad.)
NF-1	Old Foresthill Road Bridge abutments (1911–1955)	Auburn
NF-2	Eyebolt cable anchors (probably related to the construction of the new Foresthill Bridge (ca. 1972)	Auburn
NF-3	Catch basin (associated with Lake Clementine marina)	Auburn
NF-4	Water conveyance ditch segment	Auburn
NF-5	Water conveyance ditch segment	Auburn/Greenwood
NF-6	Unpaved roadway	Greenwood
NF-7	Water conveyance ditch segment	Greenwood
NF-8	Water conveyance ditch segment	Greenwood
NF-9	Placer mine adit/excavation	Greenwood

Note: USGS = U.S. Geological Survey
Source: Data provided by EDAW in 2004

The majority of the sites and features identified during the EDAW cultural resources survey are related to, or likely related to, placer mining activities that were conducted along the North Fork American River from the middle of the 19th century until at least the early decades of the 20th century. Small-scale placer mining continues today, but it is largely avocational in nature, and no commercial ventures are operating in the area. Other than mining features, several transportation-related sites were also recorded; at least one (NF-2) is not necessarily considered a historical resource because of its recent age.

CULTURAL RESOURCE NF-1: OLD FORESTHILL ROAD BRIDGE ABUTMENTS

This resource consists of two poured concrete bridge abutments located on opposite sides of the North Fork American River, immediately east of the confluence. These structures, each extending approximately 25 feet above the river, and 12 feet wide at the base and about 10 feet wide at the top, are all that remain of the Old Foresthill Road Bridge (1911–1955). This steel truss bridge once served as a vital transportation link between the Auburn and Foresthill communities. The steel bridge replaced an earlier covered wood structure that was first constructed in 1855 and was located further upriver. Remains of the stone abutments of this bridge were initially recorded in the 1970s, but portions of this stone work appear to have collapsed or have been washed away, as they could not be identified during the 2004 EDAW survey.

Although the bridge was clearly important for local transportation, it is not clear what role it may have played in servicing the mining areas or in other activities that were instrumental in the region's economic foundations during the early 20th century. Despite this uncertainty, it is unlikely that the bridge itself is (was) important or unique from a structural or engineering standpoint. Regardless, even if the bridge were important for reasons of association or construction, the bridge's removal has clearly compromised the integrity of this resource to a point where it would not be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR).

CULTURAL RESOURCE NF-2: ANCHOR BOLTS

This feature was recorded because of its proximity (i.e., location immediately adjacent) to the existing portion of the proposed trail alignment; however, it appears to be related to the 1960s–1970s construction of the new, 730-foot-high Foresthill Bridge. Two large eyebolts were set into large angular boulders or bedrock outcrops; these may have served as anchor points for cables used in the transport and placement of materials for bridge construction. These bolts remain in situ and are in excellent condition. However, because of their comparatively recent age, they are not strictly considered to be cultural resources, nor are they eligible for CRHR inclusion.

CULTURAL RESOURCE NF-3: CATCH BASIN

Cultural resource NF-3, a catch basin and 2-inch-diameter downhill-trending galvanized steel pipes placed directly within and alongside a seasonal drainage, is associated with the site of a Lake Clementine marina caretaker's house. The marina was established just upriver from Clementine Dam; the area is now occupied by a boat ramp and parking spaces. The poured concrete basin measures approximately 4 feet square, and along the down-drainage end it stands approximately 24 inches above the current drainage bed. Although the basin itself probably dates to the 1930s or 1940s when the marina was established, it has been heavily affected by later period modifications. Such modifications include the addition of chromed steel valves and galvanized pipe; traces of cut and capped ungalvanized pipes and fittings remain.

In terms of the feature's historical integrity, the basin and its associated fittings and pipes have been modified from their original configuration. In addition, this feature is not associated with any significant historical person, place, structure, building, or event. As such, is not likely eligible for CRHR listing.

CULTURAL RESOURCES NF-4, NF-5, NF-7, AND NF-8: WATER CONVEYANCE DITCHES

Among the most common cultural resources noted within and in the vicinity of the project area are ditch segments associated with water conveyance for 19th century and early 20th century placer mining operations. Several narrow mining ditch segments—NF-4, NF-5, NF-7, and NF-8—are partially silted in, but they retain some integrity in terms of their position, configuration, and incorporated rock retaining walls. None of these segments appear to represent complete ditches; they may have been only portions of larger ditch/flume systems, or they may never have been completed. Segment lengths vary: NF-4 is 740 feet, NF-5 is 1,438 feet, NF-7 is approximately 750 feet, and NF-8 is 737 feet long. Ditches NF-4, NF-5, and NF-8 are quite narrow (no more than 2–3 feet across); exhibit small rock retaining walls, especially in the vicinity of drainages; and have largely been silted in. Ditch NF-8 shows evidence of considerable construction effort, as retaining walls are relatively commonplace and substantial, and in one area the ditch cuts through and alongside a bedrock outcrop. Ditch NF-7 is the best preserved of those noted during the course of the EDAW cultural resources survey. It retains much of its original depth and intersects a historical roadway (NF-6) at its westernmost terminus.

Although such ditches are commonplace throughout the region, further documentary and field investigations could uncover important information regarding the construction periods of these ditches, the individuals or companies involved in their placement, and the mining concerns served by their presence. However, given their context and condition, there is a possibility, albeit unlikely, that some of these ditch segments could retain the necessary integrity and association to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or CRHR as contributing elements to larger water conveyance systems.

CULTURAL RESOURCE NF-6: UNPAVED ROADWAY

A single unpaved roadway (NF-6), probably related to mining activities along the North Fork American River, was located in the project area. Except for small sections, the roadway is in excellent condition. Although further research would be necessary to determine the age and function of the roadway, given the preponderance of mining features in the area it is reasonable to assume that this site could be related to a specific period of mining or to an individual operation or incorporated mining concern. Assumptions regarding the mining-related nature of this road are supported in part by the fact that a mining ditch (NF-7) intersects this roadway and then continues to the east while the road descends into the North Fork American River canyon, eventually disappearing into Lake Clementine. Although unlikely, there is always a possibility that future research could reveal a significant historical association for this roadway, possibly resulting in its being determined eligible for listing in the CRHR.

CULTURAL RESOURCE NF-9: PLACER EXCAVATIONS AND MINED BAR

The easternmost cultural resource (NF-9) documented during the EDAW inventory is a placer mine adit or excavations located at the toe of the north-facing river canyon slope near the Ponderosa Bridge. The entire bar, from the Ponderosa Bridge to approximately 2,000 feet downriver, was a major focus of placer mining activities. This bar and terrace and the toe of the adjoining slope exhibit numerous piles of tailings, ditches, possible road grades, excavations, and other features associated with mining that may have taken place over a long period during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Additional research would be necessary to determine the periods during which mining occurred along this bar and the individuals or companies most involved in extracting placer gold from the deposits.

The prominence of this bar along the North Fork American River and the degree to which it was worked suggests that this was an important location for placer mining activities over an extended period of time. Unlike bars along the Middle Fork, few of the North Fork American River bars are named, although they were clearly significant mining locales. Considering the location and condition of the bar and the dense concentration of mining features, this resource would likely benefit considerably from additional field and documentary research and would likely be determined eligible for CRHR listing.

SUMMARY OF RESOURCE ELIGIBILITY

One of the most important considerations in determining the potential consequences of the proposed project on documented cultural resources is the level of significance each site or feature possesses when measured against the CRHR criteria (see Section 6.2, "Regulatory Setting," below). Potential impacts on sites that are currently listed or potentially eligible for listing in the CRHR must be mitigated according to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The potential for eligibility of each documented resource within and in the vicinity of the proposed trail alignment is summarized below in Table 6-2.

Table 6-2
Preliminary Assessment of Eligibility for Listing in the California Register of Historical Resources

Resource Number	Resource Type	Preliminary Assessment
NF-1	Old Foresthill Road Bridge abutments (1911–1955)	Not eligible
NF-2	Eyebolt cable anchors (probably related to the construction of the New Foresthill Bridge (ca. 1972)	Not eligible
NF-3	Catch basin (associated with Lake Clementine marina)	Not eligible
NF-4	Water conveyance ditch segment	Possibly eligible
NF-5	Water conveyance ditch segment	Possibly eligible
NF-6	Unpaved roadway	Possibly eligible
NF-7	Water conveyance ditch segment	Possibly eligible
NF-8	Water conveyance ditch segment	Possibly eligible
NF-9	Placer mine adit/excavation	Possibly eligible

Source: Data provided by EDAW in 2004

6.2 REGULATORY SETTING

6.2.1 FEDERAL PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS

The federal lead agency for the proposed project, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), would need to comply with all applicable federal laws (see the Initial Study/Environmental Assessment previously completed for the project [Placer County and Reclamation 2004]). Placer County (County) is not specifically required to comply with these laws as part of its CEQA compliance for the proposed project; therefore, they will not be discussed in this EIR.

6.2.2 STATE PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

CEQA provides for the documentation and protection of significant prehistoric and historic resources. Before a discretionary project is approved, the potential impacts of the project on archaeological and historical resources must be considered (Public Resources Code [PRC] Sections 21083.2 and 21084.1, State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 [14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 15064.5]).

Under CEQA, cultural resources can include traces of prehistoric habitation and activities, historic-era sites and materials, and places used for traditional Native American observances or places with special cultural significance. In general, any trace of human activity more than 50 years old must be treated as a potential cultural

resource. However, as projects can extend over a period of years from planning to implementation, the minimum age generally accepted for resources to be considered historic for the purposes of CEQA is 45 years.

Prehistoric and historic cultural resources in the project area may be eligible for inclusion in the CRHR. Listing, or eligibility for listing, in the CRHR is the primary consideration in whether or not a resource is subjected to further research and documentation. CEQA states that if a project would result in significant impacts on important historical resources, then alternative plans or mitigation measures must be considered. However, only significant historical resources need to be addressed. CEQA Section 5024.1 (PRC Section 5024.1) and the State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15064.5 [14 CCR Section 15064.5]) define a significant historical resource as "a resource listed or eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources."

A cultural resource may be eligible for listing in the CRHR if it:

- is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
- is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
- embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction or represents the work of an important creative individual or possesses high artistic values; or
- has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

If a prehistoric or historic resource does not necessarily meet any of the four CRHR criteria, but does meet the definition of a "unique" site as outlined in PRC Section 21083.2, it may still be treated as a significant resource. A "unique" archaeological resource is defined as:

> …an archaeological artifact, object or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:
>
> (1) Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information.
>
> (2) Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type.
>
> (3) Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

As a matter of policy, public agencies should avoid damaging effects on historic and archaeological resources, particularly those that are eligible for the CRHR. When impacts cannot be avoided, their effects can be mitigated through:

- avoidance during construction phases,
- incorporation of sites into open space,
- capping resources with chemically stable fill,
- deeding a site into a permanent conservation easement, or
- data recovery (testing and excavation).

The State CEQA Guidelines also provide for a measure of protection for Native American human remains (CCR Section 15064.5[d]) and for the accidental discovery of cultural resources (CCR Section 15064.5[e]). These are particularly important provisions in that they take into account the possibility that significant resources not noted

as a result of previous research efforts may be present within a project area and need to be treated in a way commensurate with CEQA standards. Section 15064.5(e) of the State CEQA Guidelines (i.e., CCR Section 15064.5[e]) requires that excavation activities be stopped whenever human remains are uncovered, and that the county coroner be called in to assess the remains. If the county coroner determines that the remains are those of a Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) must be contacted within 24 hours, and the provisions for treating or disposing of the remains and any associated grave goods as described in CCR Section 15064.5 must be followed.

6.2.3 LOCAL PLANS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND LAWS

PLACER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

The following are the relevant goal and policies identified by the *Placer County General Plan* (Placer County 1994) for cultural resources.

- **GOAL 5.D:** To identify, protect, and enhance Placer County's important historical, archaeological, paleontological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment.

- **Policy 5.D.1.** The County shall assist the citizens of Placer County in becoming active guardians of their community's cultural resources.

- **Policy 5.D.2.** The County shall solicit the cooperation of the owners of cultural and paleontological resources, encourage those owners to treat these resources as assets rather than liabilities, and encourage the support of the general public for the preservation and enhancement of these resources.

- **Policy 5.D.3.** The County shall solicit the views of the Native American Heritage Commission and/or the local Native American community in cases where development may result in disturbance to sites containing evidence of Native American activity and/or to sites of cultural importance.

- **Policy 5.D.4.** The County shall coordinate with the cities and municipal advisory councils in the County to promote the preservation and maintenance of Placer County's paleontological and archaeological resources.

- **Policy 5.D.5.** The County shall use, where feasible, incentive programs to assist private property owners in preserving and enhancing cultural resources.

- **Policy 5.D.6.** The County shall require that discretionary development projects identify and protect from damage, destruction, and abuse, important historical, archaeological, paleontological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment. Such assessments shall be incorporated into a County-wide cultural resource data base, to be maintained by the Department of Museums.

- **Policy 5.D.7.** The County shall require that discretionary development projects be designed to avoid potential impacts to significant paleontological or cultural resources whenever possible. Unavoidable impacts, whenever possible, shall be reduced to a less than significant level and/or shall be mitigated by extracting maximum recoverable data. Determinations of impacts, significance, and mitigation shall be made by qualified archaeological (in consultation with recognized local Native American groups), historical, or paleontological consultants, depending on the type of resource in question.

- **Policy 5.D.8.** The County shall, within its power, maintain confidentiality regarding the locations of archaeological sites in order to preserve and protect these resources from vandalism and the unauthorized removal of artifacts.

- **Policy 5.D.9.** The County shall use the State Historic Building Code to encourage the preservation of historic structures.

- **Policy 5.D.10.** The County will use existing legislation and propose local legislation for the identification and protection of cultural resources and their contributing environment.

- **Policy 5.D.11.** The County shall support the registration of cultural resources in appropriate landmark designations (i.e., National Register of Historic Places, California Historical Landmarks, Points of Historical Interest, or Local Landmark). The County shall assist private citizens seeking these designations for their property.

- **Policy 5.D.12.** The County shall consider acquisition programs as a means of preserving significant cultural resources that are not suitable for private development. Organizations that could provide assistance in this area include, but are not limited to, the Archaeological Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, and the Placer Land Trust.

WEIMAR-APPLEGATE-CLIPPER GAP GENERAL PLAN

The *Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap General Plan* contains the following goal and policy relevant to cultural resources in the project area.

- **GOAL 1:** To preserve and enhance all significant historic and archaeological sites and features.
- **Policy 1.** Identify and protect from destruction and abuse all representative and unique sites.

FORESTHILL DIVIDE COMMUNITY PLAN

The *Foresthill Divide Community Plan* (Community Plan), which is currently in draft form, covers the project area. The Community Plan contains the following goals and policies relevant to cultural resources in the project area.

- **GOAL 4.B.1:** Identify, protect, record and enhance the Divide's important historical, archaeological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment.

- **Policy 4.B.1-2.** The County and the community shall preserve the historical character of the Core Area of Foresthill.

- **Policy 4.B.1-5.** Solicit the views of the Native American Heritage Commission and/or the local Native American community in cases where development may result in disturbance to sites containing evidence of Native American activity and/or to sites of cultural importance.

- **Policy 4.B.1-7.** Require that discretionary development projects identify and protect from damage, destruction, and abuse, important historical, archaeological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment. Such assessments shall be incorporated into a countywide cultural resource data base, to be maintained by the Department of Museums.

- **Policy 4.B.1-8.** Existing large trees or groves of historic and/or cultural significance (i.e., weather tree in Michigan Bluff, cork oaks on Todd Valley Road, Finning Tree off Finning Mill Road, Fork's House Grove, Harold T. "Bizz" Johnson Tree) should be identified and protected to the best of the County's ability. Trees so identified should only be removed as a last resort.

- **Policy 4.B.1-9.** Areas of potential archaeological sensitivity shall be identified and catalogued by Placer County. Proposed development or public works projects within this area shall be required to undertake an archaeological survey prior to project approval. Proposed projects outside this area, in locations that have not

been significantly disturbed, shall be referred to the California Archaeological Inventory, Northern Information Center, California State University, Sacramento for review and comment, and shall be required to undertake an archaeological survey prior to project approval upon recommendation by the Center.

- **Policy 4.B.1-15.** The County shall make the protection of significant cultural resources a priority over recordation and/or destruction.

- **Policy 4.B.2-1.** The County shall encourage the development of multipurpose facilities which can function as recreational sites, open space areas and for historic, cultural, and archaeological preservation.

6.3 IMPACTS

6.3.1 ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

Cultural resources investigations for the project area consisted of a staged approach that included Native American consultation, prefield research, field surveys, and resource documentation. All aspects of the cultural resources study were conducted in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (National Park Service 1995).

NATIVE AMERICAN CONSULTATION

In accordance with the consultation requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, EDAW, on behalf of Reclamation, initiated the consultation process with appropriate Native American groups with a possible interest in the cultural resource studies and the proposed trail construction. EDAW contacted the Native American Heritage Commission in Sacramento and requested a list of suitable tribal organizations and individuals and a search of the NAHC Sacred Lands Files. The Sacred Lands Files search revealed that no known sites of cultural or spiritual importance to the present-day Native American community were known to exist within the project area. The NAHC also provided contact information (Table 6-3) for the following groups and individuals from the Auburn area.

Table 6-3
Native American Contacts Provided by the Native American Heritage Commission

Individual	Address	Affiliation
Rose Enos	15310 Bancroft Road Auburn, CA 95603	Maidu/Washoe
Christopher Suehead	Todd Valley Miwok-Maidu Cultural Foundation P.O. Box 1490 Foresthill, CA 95631	Miwok/Maidu
Jessica Tavares, Chairperson	United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria 575 Menlo Drive, Suite 2 Rocklin, CA 95765	Maidu/Miwok
John Suehead	United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria 575 Menlo Drive, Suite 2 Rocklin, CA 95765	Maidu/Miwok

Source: Data provided by EDAW in 2004

Letters were sent to each of the contacts noted in Table 6-3 and two phone calls to each individual were made before the field survey was conducted. One organization, the United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria, sent a letter expressing concern about Native American sites and remains that may be possibly located

within and in the vicinity of the project area. However, no desire to accompany the archaeological surveyors was expressed.

Prefield Research

EDAW's research into cultural resource issues for the proposed project began with a records search of pertinent cultural resources information. This search was conducted at the North Central Information Center (NCIC) and Central California Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System. Sources consulted during the records search included the NRHP, the CRHR, and the following other sources:

- *California Points of Historical Interest* (State Parks 1992, and updates)
- *California Historical Landmarks* (State of California 1996)
- *Directory of Properties in the Historical Resources Inventory* (State Parks 1999)
- *Historic Properties Directory* (State Office of Historic Preservation n.d.)
- *California Inventory of Historical Resources* (State Office of Historic Preservation 1996)

Field Surveys

The project area was surveyed in approximately four sections, each of which was approximately 2–4 miles long. All survey sessions were conducted in late January and early February 2004, except that the segments of the alternative trail alignment were surveyed in February 2006 and March 2007. Access to the various trail sections was facilitated by dirt roads that allowed for quick transportation of field personnel and equipment to the proposed trail alignment. The vast majority of the proposed trail alignment is situated along steep slopes above the south bank of the North Fork American River. Because the survey corridor is narrow (approximately 25 feet), the cultural resources investigation could usually be performed in a single pass along the survey route.

When a new or previously recorded archaeological resource was encountered during the survey, its location was plotted on the appropriate U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map. Proximity to the river and the varying terrain features within much of the project area made plotting locations relatively simple. In addition, a hand-held GPS unit with submeter accuracy was used to record Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinates for each site or isolated artifact. However, because of the canyon terrain and sometimes inclement weather conditions, satellite communication was intermittent in portions of the project area. As a result, the locations of two resources (a section of unpaved roadway and a mining ditch) could only be hand plotted on the USGS topographic map.

Site information was recorded on appropriate State Parks (i.e., DPR) Series 523 forms in the field, and additional notes were taken to help document the more complicated resources. A Primary Record (DPR 523A) and Archaeological Site Record (DPR 523C) were completed for each documented resource. Linear Feature Records (DPR 523E) were used to document linear resources such as the ditch segments and roadway.

6.3.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on the Placer County CEQA Checklist and Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, the proposed project would result in a potentially significant impact on cultural resources if it would:

- cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource or a historical resource as defined in Section 21083.2 of CEQA and Section 15064.5 of the State CEQA Guidelines, respectively;

- have the potential to cause a physical change, which would affect unique ethnic cultural values;

- restrict existing religious or sacred uses within the potential impact area; or

- disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

Section 15064.5 of the State CEQA Guidelines defines "substantial adverse change" as physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings.

6.3.3 IMPACT ANALYSIS

IMPACT 6-1	Cultural Resources – Potential for Loss of or Damage to Potentially Significant Cultural Resources. *Six unevaluated, although potentially significant, cultural resources have been documented within and immediately adjacent to the proposed trail alignment. The proposed project has the potential to destroy these cultural resources.*
Significance	*Potentially Significant*
Mitigation Proposed	*Mitigation Measure 6-1: Realign Trail to Avoid Potentially Significant Cultural Resources*
Residual Significance	*Less Than Significant*

Several unevaluated cultural resources are located immediately adjacent to the proposed trail alignment: water conveyance ditches related to early mining activities (sites NF-4, NF-5, NF-7, and NF-8); an unpaved roadway (site NF-6); and a bar exhibiting evidence of extensive 19th century and/or early 20th century placer mining (site NF-9). Grading of the proposed trail as presently mapped has the potential to affect these resources, all of which have been found to be potentially eligible for listing in the CRHR and which therefore are considered potentially significant resources. Construction activities could modify potentially significant contributing elements, or damage or totally destroy recorded sites and features. Because construction of the proposed trail has the potential to affect these potentially significant cultural resources, this impact is considered potentially significant.

IMPACT 6-2	Cultural Resources – Potential for Disturbance of Known and Undiscovered Cultural Resources. *The project vicinity is known to contain numerous historic and prehistoric resources. In addition, buried traces of historic-era activity and early Native American occupation that remain undocumented may be present within and in the vicinity of the proposed trail alignment. Ground-disturbing activities during trail construction could disturb these known and undiscovered cultural resources.*
Significance	*Potentially Significant*
Mitigation Proposed	*Mitigation Measure 6-2: Protect Previously Unknown Cultural Resources*
Residual Significance	*Less Than Significant*

The entirety of the proposed trail alignment has been subjected to an intensive archaeological inventory, and the project vicinity is known to contain numerous historic and prehistoric resources. In addition to those cultural resources documented during the field surveys, a number of as-yet-undiscovered cultural resources may exist in the project area. Buried traces of historic-era activity and early Native American occupation that could not be documented during the surface pedestrian survey may be present within and in the vicinity of the proposed trail alignment; therefore, the proposed project has the potential to disturb these cultural resources. Because unknown or undocumented subsurface cultural resources could be uncovered during construction of the proposed trail, this impact is considered potentially significant.

IMPACT 6-3	Cultural Resources – Potential for Disturbance of Unknown Human Interments. *Although no evidence of human interments was found in documentary research or the archaeological inventory, ground-disturbing activities during trail construction could adversely affect presently unmarked human interments.*
Significance	*Potentially Significant*
Mitigation Proposed	*Mitigation Measure 6-3: Stop Potentially Damaging Work if Human Remains are Uncovered during Construction*
Residual Significance	*Less Than Significant*

The entirety of the proposed trail alignment has been subjected to an intensive archaeological inventory, and the project vicinity is known to contain numerous historic and prehistoric resources. No evidence of human remains was found within or near the project area in documentary research and the archaeological inventory conducted for the proposed project; however, potentially unmarked Native American or historic-era human interments could be encountered during project-related ground-disturbing activities. Because unknown or undocumented subsurface human remains could be uncovered during construction of the proposed trail, this impact is considered potentially significant.

6.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation Measure 6-1: Realign Trail to Avoid Potentially Significant Cultural Resources.

Mitigation Measure 6-1 applies to Impact 6-1.

To ensure that construction of the proposed trail avoids all significant documented cultural resources in the project area, the County shall realign the trail route as follows:

- The proposed trail shall be realigned at least 25 feet downslope from sites NF-4, NF-5, NF-7, and NF-8 to eliminate direct impacts and reduce the possibility of trail-related erosion and siltation.
- The proposed trail shall be realigned at least 25–50 feet upslope from the currently proposed trail alignment from the Ponderosa Bridge to approximately 2,000 feet downriver to avoid the historically mined bar (site NF-9) and associated features.

Mitigation Measure 6-2: Protect Previously Unknown Cultural Resources.

Mitigation Measure 6-2 applies to Impact 6-2.

If archaeological materials such as historic building or structure remains, artifact deposits or scatters, or prehistoric artifacts such as stone tool flaking debitage, mortars, pestles, shell, bone, or human remains are encountered during trail construction, all ground-disturbing activity in the area shall cease. A qualified cultural resources specialist shall be contacted to identify the materials, determine their possible significance, and formulate appropriate mitigation measures. Appropriate measures may include no action, avoidance of the resource through trail realignment, subsurface testing, and potentially data recovery.

Mitigation Measure 6-3: Stop Potentially Damaging Work if Human Remains are Uncovered during Construction.

Mitigation Measure 6-3 applies to Impact 6-3.

In accordance with the California Health and Safety Code, if human remains are uncovered during ground-disturbing activities, the contractor and/or the County shall immediately halt potentially damaging excavation in the area of the burial and notify the County Coroner and a professional archaeologist to determine the nature of the remains. The coroner is required to examine all discoveries of human remains within 48 hours of receiving notice of a discovery on private or state lands (Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5[b]). If the coroner determines that the remains are those of a Native American, he or she must contact the NAHC by phone within 24 hours of making that determination (Health and Safety Code Section 7050[c]). Following the coroner's findings, the property owner, contractor or County, an archaeologist, and the NAHC-designated Most Likely Descendent (MLD) shall determine the ultimate treatment and disposition of the remains and take appropriate steps to ensure that additional human interments are not disturbed.

Upon the discovery of Native American remains, the procedures above regarding involvement of the County Coroner, notification of the NAHC, and identification of a MLD shall be followed. The County shall ensure that the immediate vicinity (according to generally accepted cultural or archaeological standards and practices) is not damaged or disturbed by further development activity until consultation with the MLD has taken place. The MLD shall have 48 hours to complete a site inspection and make recommendations after being are granted access to the site. A range of possible treatments for the remains, including nondestructive removal and analysis, preservation in place, relinquishment of the remains and associated items to the descendents, or other culturally appropriate treatment may be discussed. State Assembly Bill (AB) 2641 suggests that the concerned parties may extend discussions beyond the initial 48 hours to allow for the discovery of additional remains. AB 2641(e) includes a list of site protection measures and states that the County shall comply with one or more of the following:

- Record the site with the NAHC or the appropriate Information Center
- Utilize an open-space or conservation zoning designation or easement
- Record a document with the county in which the property is located

The County or their authorized representative shall rebury the Native American human remains and associated grave goods with appropriate dignity on the property in a location not subject to further subsurface disturbance if the NAHC is unable to identify a MLD or the MLD fails to make a recommendation within 48 hours after being granted access to the site. The County or their authorized representative may also re-inter the remains in a location not subject to further disturbance if they reject the recommendation of the MLD, and mediation by the NAHC fails to provide measures acceptable to the landowner. Adherence to these procedures and other provisions of the California Health and Safety Code and AB 2641(e) will reduce potential impacts to human remains to a less-than-significant level.